



TUFTS UNIVERSITY  
Arts & Sciences Library



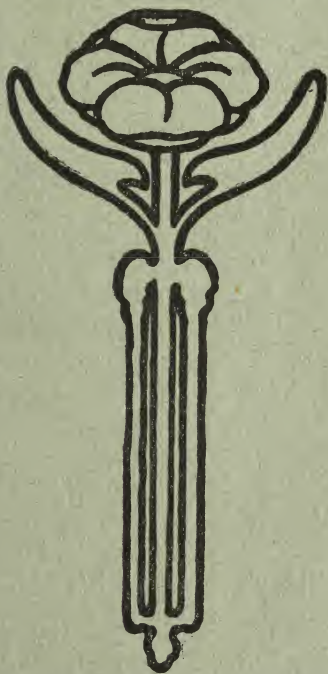
Digitized by the Internet Archive  
in 2016





**HOLIDAY DIALOGUES**  
**FROM DICKENS**

---



---

**WALTER H. BAKER & CO.**  
**BOSTON**



# HOLIDAY DIALOGUES

## FROM DICKENS

ARRANGED BY  
W. ELIOT FETTE

---

BOSTON  
WALTER H. BAKER & CO.

PR  
4553  
IF4  
H6  
19002

AFD-0827

## PREFACE.

---

IN arranging my first volume of Dialogues, it was my aim to make each scene entirely independent of every other, as I thought that so they would be best adapted to school purposes; at the same time, by bringing closely together those scenes which were taken from the same novel, I intended to show that there was a certain connection between them, and to suggest the idea of grouping them in the form of dramas for evening entertainments. Finding that the possibility of such a use of the dialogues had been generally overlooked, I took occasion, in the preface to the third edition of the book, to call attention to it, and to give an outline of several little plays which I had myself formed in that way, and which had been performed with success.

In this volume I have pursued a different course, and instead of a collection of dialogues which might be grouped into dramas, I have arranged a number of dramas which may be, if desired, separated into dialogues, nearly every scene containing enough of interest in itself to render it acceptable as a part of a school exhibition.

If it may be assumed that by most persons that will be

deemed the best dramatization of an author's works in which, without loss of unity, the language of the original has been most faithfully preserved, I may claim that the following "Dramas from Dickens" are superior to those hitherto presented under that name, for they are given here just as Mr. Dickens wrote them, without alteration or interpolation; and when it is added that Mr. Dickens himself took part in the performance of plays from these same stories, no further proof would seem to be required of their being worthy the ambition of the most talented performers, and the attention of the best audience.

In every scene careful directions are given as to entrances, exits, and positions on the stage, and much of what is technically called "stage business" is indicated; whilst at the end of the book will be found a complete Index to Characters, with a description of the personal appearance and costume of each person.

W. E. F.

# CONTENTS.

---

## A MERRY CHRISTMAS.

	PAGE
CHRISTMAS EVE. . . . .	11
MARLEY'S GHOST. . . . .	17
CHRISTMAS PAST. . . . .	22
CHRISTMAS PRESENT. . . . .	27
CHRISTMAS YET-TO-COME. . . . .	33
NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND. . . . .	42
THE END OF IT ALL. . . . .	45

## THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH.

THE CARRIER. . . . .	49
THE BLIND GIRL. . . . .	64
BERTHA'S PICNIC. . . . .	71
THE CRISIS. . . . .	76
REPARATION. . . . .	80
SIGHT RESTORED. . . . .	89
MY BOY FROM THE GOLDEN SOUTH AMERICAS. . . . .	95

## THE BATTLE OF LIFE.

ALL A FARCE. . . . .	105
SNITCHEY AND CRAGGS. . . . .	122
HOME. . . . .	130
A MYSTERY. . . . .	134
THE WELCOME. . . . .	140
THE NUTMEG GRATER. . . . .	148
HOME AGAIN. . . . .	160





## STAGE DIRECTIONS.

*(The reader is supposed to face the audience.)*

C. CENTRE.

L. LEFT.

L. C. LEFT CENTRE.

L. U. E. LEFT UPPER  
ENTRANCE.

C. D. CENTRE DOOR.

R. RIGHT.

R. C. RIGHT CENTRE.

R. U. E. RIGHT UPPER  
ENTRANCE.



**MERRY CHRISTMAS.**



# DIALOGUES FROM DICKENS.

---

## MERRY CHRISTMAS.

---

### CHRISTMAS EVE.

SCENE: Office of EBENEZER SCROOGE, the Miser. —

SCROOGE *at his desk.* *His clerk, BOB CRATCHIT, in a small adjoining room.*

*Enter FRED.*

*Fred.* A Merry Christmas, uncle! God save you!

*Scrooge.* Bah! Humbug!

*Fred.* Christmas a humbug, uncle! You don't mean that, I am sure.

*Scrooge.* I do. Merry Christmas! What right have you to be merry? What reason have you to be merry? You're poor enough.

*Fred.* (*Gayly.*) Come, then, what right have you to be dismal? What reason have you to be morose? You're rich enough.

*Scrooge.* Bah! Humbug!

*Fred.* Don't be cross, uncle.

*Scrooge.* What else can I be when I live in such a world of fools as this? Merry Christmas! Out upon Merry Christmas! What's Christmas time to you, but a time for paying bills without money; a time for finding yourself a year older and not an hour richer; a time for balancing your books, and having every item in 'em through a round dozen of months presented dead against you? If I could work my will, every idiot who goes about with "Merry Christmas" on his lips, should be boiled with his own pudding, and buried with a stake of holly through his heart. He should.

*Fred.* Uncle!

*Scrooge.* Nephew, keep Christmas in your own way, and let me keep it in mine.

*Fred.* Keep it! But you don't keep it.

*Scrooge.* Let me leave it alone, then. Much good may it do you! Much good it has *ever* done you!

*Fred.* There are many things from which I might have derived good, by which I have not profited, I dare say, Christmas among the rest. But I am sure I have always thought of Christmas time, when it has come round, — apart from the veneration due to its sacred name and origin, if anything belonging to it can be apart from that, — as a good time; a kind, forgiving, charitable, pleasant time; the only time I know of, in the long calendar of the year, when men and women seem, by one consent, to open their shut-up hearts freely, and to think of people below them as if they really were fellow-passengers to the grave, and not another race of creatures bound on other journeys. And, therefore, uncle, though it has never put a scrap



of gold or silver in my pocket, I believe that it *has* done me good, and *will* do me good ; and I say, God bless it ! (BOB CRATCHIT *applauds*.)

*Scrooge.* (*Turning towards BOB's room.*) Let me hear another sound from *you* and you'll keep your Christmas by losing your situation. (*To FRED.*) You're quite a powerful speaker, sir. I wonder you don't go into Parliament.

*Fred.* Don't be angry, uncle. Come ! Dine with us to-morrow.

*Scrooge.* I'll see you hanged first.

*Fred.* But why ? Why ?

*Scrooge.* Why did you get married ?

*Fred.* Because I fell in love.

*Scrooge.* (*Growling.*) Because you fell in love ! Good afternoon !

*Fred.* Nay, uncle, but you never came to see me before that happened. Why give it as a reason for not coming now ?

*Scrooge.* Good afternoon !

*Fred.* I want nothing from you ; I ask nothing of you. Why cannot we be friends ?

*Scrooge.* Good afternoon !

*Fred.* I am sorry, with all my heart, to find you so resolute. We have never had any quarrel, to which I have been a party. But I have made the trial in homage to Christmas, and I'll keep my Christmas humor to the last. So a Merry Christmas, uncle !

*Scrooge.* Good afternoon !

*Fred.* And a Happy New Year ! (*Passes out through the clerk's office.*) A Merry Christmas, Mr. Cratchit !

*Bob.* A Merry Christmas to *you*, sir !

*Scrooge.* There's another fellow, my clerk, with fifteen shillings a week, and a wife and family, talking about a Merry Christmas. I'll retire to Bedlam.

*Enter a GENTLEMAN, hat in hand.*

*Visitor.* (*Looking at his list.*) Scrooge and Marley, I believe. Have I the pleasure of addressing Mr. Scrooge, or Mr. Marley?

*Scrooge.* Mr. Marley has been dead these seven years. He died seven years ago this very night.

*Visitor.* (*Handing his papers to S.*) We have no doubt his liberality is well represented by his surviving partner. (*SCROOGE frowns, shakes his head, and hands back the papers.*) At this festive season of the year, Mr. Scrooge (*taking up a pen*), it is more than usually desirable that we should make some slight provision for the poor and destitute, who suffer greatly at the present time. Many thousands are in want of common necessities; hundreds of thousands are in want of common comforts, sir.

*Scrooge.* Are there no prisons?

*Visitor.* (*Laying down the pen.*) Plenty of prisons.

*Scrooge.* And the union work-houses, are they still in operation?

*Visitor.* They are. Still, I wish I could say they were not.

*Scrooge.* The tread-mill and the Poor Law are in full vigor, then?

*Visitor.* Both very busy, sir.

*Scrooge.* O, I was afraid, from what you said at first, that something had occurred to stop them in their useful course. I am very glad to hear it.

*Visitor.* Under the impression that they scarcely furnish Christian cheer of mind or body to the multitude, a few of us are endeavoring to raise a fund to buy the poor some meat and drink, and means of warmth. We choose this time, because it is a time, of all others, when Want is keenly felt, and Abundance rejoices. What shall I put you down for?

*Scrooge.* Nothing.

*Visitor.* You wish to be anonymous?

*Scrooge.* I wish to be left alone. Since you ask me what I wish, sir, that is my answer. I don't make merry myself at Christmas, and I can't afford to make idle people merry. I help to support the establishments I have mentioned—they cost enough; and those who are badly off must go there.

*Visitor.* Many can't go there; and many would rather die.

*Scrooge.* If they would rather die, they had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. Besides,—excuse me,—I don't know that.

*Visitor.* But you *might* know it.

*Scrooge.* It's not my business. It's enough for a man to understand his own business, and not to interfere with other people's. Mine occupies me constantly. Good afternoon, sir! (*Exit GENTLEMAN.*) Six o'clock, Cratchit; time to shut up. (*CRATCHIT snuffs candle, puts on his hat, and appears at his door.*) You'll want all day to-morrow, I suppose.

*Cratchit.* If quite convenient, sir.

*Scrooge.* It's not convenient, and it's not fair. If I was to stop half a crown for it, you'd think yourself ill used, I'll be bound. (*C. smiles.*) And yet you

don't think *me* ill used, when I pay a day's wages for no work.

*Crat.* It's only once a year, sir.

*Scrooge.* A poor excuse for picking a man's pocket every twenty-fifth of December! (*Buttons his coat to the chin.*) But I suppose you must have the whole day. Be here all the earlier next morning.

*Crat.* I will, sir. (*SCROOGE goes out, grumbling.*)  
[*Curtain.*

---

NOTE. — For the presentation of the “visions,” which form a part of the three following Scenes, the stage must be divided by a “flat” running from side to side, and separating Scrooge's room, which is in front, from the space behind, in which the pictures are to be placed. In the centre of this flat (which must be painted with some light color, to represent the wall of Scrooge's room) is an arch, occupying about two thirds of the width of the stage. The arch is covered by a curtain (of the same color as the flat), made to roll up. Greater depth can be given to the pictures by stretching a gauze across the arch behind the curtain. If the stage is not deep enough to allow of this arrangement, Scrooge and the Ghost must go off, and the drop-curtain must fall in each scene before the visions appear. They will then station themselves one on each side of the stage, before “ringing up;” the curtain will rise, and the visions will appear on the full stage. In this case the furniture of Scrooge's room must be removed, and slight changes made in the text, so that Scrooge may leave his chamber with each of the Spirits. The whole may be made more effective by introducing soft music, appropriate to each scene, as the curtain rises and falls upon each vision.

## MARLEY'S GHOST.

SCENE: SCROOGE'S Chamber, shabbily furnished. R. a door; L. a fireplace; tin sauce-pan on the hob; R. a bed, with curtains (or, simply, curtains, so hung as to seem to conceal a bed); on the left, SCROOGE, in dressing-gown, slippers, and night-cap, and without his cravat, dozes in an arm-chair. Suddenly bells are heard on every side; SCROOGE wakes with a start; bells cease ringing; begin again furiously, then stop altogether. The clanking of a heavy chain succeeds; a heavy tread without; door opens R., and GHOST OF MARLEY enters. (See Index.) It advances, and stops a few paces from SCROOGE, who stares at it in terror.

Scrooge. How now; what do you want with me?

Ghost. Much!

Scrooge. Who are you?

Ghost. Ask me who I was.

Scrooge. (Louder.) Who were you, then? You're particular for a shade.

Ghost. In life I was your partner, Jacob Marley.

Scrooge. (Doubtfully.) Can you — can you — sit down?

Ghost. I can.

Scrooge. Do it then. (G. sits on a stool facing S.)

Ghost. You don't believe in me.

Scrooge. I don't.

Ghost. What evidence would you have of my reality beyond that of your own senses?

*Scrooge.* I don't know.

*Ghost.* Why do you doubt your senses.

*Scrooge.* Because a little thing affects them. A slight disorder of the stomach makes them cheats. You may be an undigested bit of beef, a blot of mustard, a crumb of cheese, a fragment of an underdone potato. There's more of gravy than of grave about you, whatever you are! You see this toothpick?

*Ghost.* (*Looking steadily at SCROOGE.*) I do.

*Scrooge.* You are not looking at it.

*Ghost.* But I see it, notwithstanding.

*Scrooge.* Well! I have but to swallow this, and be for the rest of my days persecuted by a legion of goblins, all of my own creation. Humbug, I tell you; Humbug! (*GHOST cries out, and shakes its chain. SCROOGE falls upon his knees, and clasps his hands.*) Mercy! Dreadful apparition, why do you trouble me?

*Ghost.* Man of the worldly mind, do you believe in me or not?

*Scrooge.* I do! I must! But why do spirits walk the earth, and why do they come to me?

*Ghost.* It is required of every man that the spirit within him should walk abroad among his fellow-men, and travel far and wide; and if that spirit goes not forth in life, it is condemned to do so after death. It is doomed to wander through the world,—O, woe is me!—and witness what it cannot share, but might have shared on earth, and turned to happiness! (*Cries out, shakes its chain again, and wrings its hands.*)

*Scrooge.* (*Trembling.*) You are fettered. Tell me why?

*Ghost.* I wear the chain I forged in life. I girded it on of my own free will, and of my own free will I wore it. Is its pattern strange to you? Or would you know the weight and length of the strong coil you bear yourself? It was full as heavy and as long as this, seven Christmas eves ago. You have labored on it since. It is a ponderous chain! (*S. glances about him on the floor.*)

*Scrooge.* (*Imploringly.*) Jacob! Old Jacob Marley, tell me more. Speak comfort to me, Jacob!

*Ghost.* I have none to give. It comes from other regions, Ebenezer Scrooge, and is conveyed by other ministers, to other kinds of men. Nor can I tell you what I would. A very little more, is all permitted to me. I cannot rest; I cannot stay; I cannot linger anywhere. My spirit never walked beyond our counting-house. Mark me! — in life my spirit never roved beyond the narrow limits of our money-changing hole; and weary journeys lie before me. (*S. still on his knees, puts his hands in his pockets and ponders.*)

*Scrooge.* You must have been very slow about it, Jacob.

*Ghost.* Slow!

*Scrooge.* (*Musingly.*) Seven years dead, and travelling all the time?

*Ghost.* The whole time. No rest, no peace. Incessant torture of remorse.

*Scrooge.* You travel fast?

*Ghost.* On the wings of the wind.

*Scrooge.* You might have got over a great quantity of ground in seven years.

*Ghost.* (*Clanking its chain, and uttering another cry.*) O, captive bound, and double-ironed, not to



know that ages of incessant labor by immortal creatures for this earth, must pass into eternity, before the good of which it is susceptible is all developed. Not to know that any Christian spirit, working kindly in its little sphere, whatever it may be, will find its mortal life too short for its vast means of usefulness. Not to know that no space of regret can make amends for one life's opportunities misused! Yet such was I! O! such was I!

*Scrooge.* But you were always a good man of business, Jacob.

*Ghost.* (*Wringing its hands.*) Business! Man-kind was my business. The common welfare was my business; charity, mercy, forbearance, and benevolence, were all my business. The dealings of my trade were but a drop of water in the comprehensive ocean of my business. (*Raises his chain, and throws it down again.*) At this time of the rolling year, I suffer most. Why did I walk through crowds of fellow-beings with my eyes turned down, and never raise them to that blessed star which led the Wise Men to a poor abode! Were there no poor homes to which its light would have conducted *me*? (*S. trembles.*) Hear me! My time is nearly gone.

*Scrooge.* I will. But don't be hard upon me! Don't be flowery, Jacob, pray!

*Ghost.* How it is that I appear before you, in a shape that you can see, I may not tell. I have sat invisible beside you many and many a day. (*S. shudders.*) That is no light part of my penance. I am here to-night to warn you that you have yet a chance and hope of escaping my fate. A chance and hope of my procuring, Ebenezer.

*Scrooge.* You were always a good friend to me. Thank'ee!

*Ghost.* You will be haunted by three spirits.

*Scrooge.* (*Falteringly.*) Is that — the chance — and hope — you mentioned, Jacob?

*Ghost.* It is.

*Scrooge.* I, — I think I'd rather not.

*Ghost.* Without their visits, you cannot hope to shun the path I tread. Expect the first to-morrow, when the bell tolls One.

*Scrooge.* Couldn't I take 'em all at once, and have it over, Jacob?

*Ghost.* Expect the second on the next night at the same hour; the third upon the next night when the last stroke of Twelve has ceased to vibrate. Look to see me no more; and look that, for your own sake, **you** remember what has passed between us.

[*G. winds the chain round his arm, rises and walks slowly backward towards the door.*

*Music.* *S. rises from his knees and follows. When G. reaches the door, it raises its hand. S. stops, with hands clasped, and raised supplicatingly; G. vanishes, and S. falls heavily on the floor. Curtain.*

## "CHRISTMAS PAST."

SCENE, the same. *Time, night; SCROOGE again asleep before the fire. A bell strikes One; the room is suddenly filled with light, and the GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PAST (See Index) stands behind SCROOGE, who wakes with a start.*

*Scrooge.* Are you the Spirit, sir, whose coming was foretold to me?

*Ghost.* I am.

*Scrooge.* Who and what are you?

*Ghost.* I am the Ghost of Christmas Past.

*Scrooge.* Long Past?

*Ghost.* No. Your Past.

*Scrooge.* May I ask what business brings you here?

*Ghost.* Your welfare.

*Scrooge.* Thank you; but a night of unbroken rest would be more conducive to that end.

*Ghost.* Your reclamation, then. Take heed! Rise, now, and see what I would show you. (*They turn towards the back; — Music; — the curtain rises slowly, and shows VISION I.: a room, in which is a boy seated at a desk. He has before him a book containing large illustrations. As he turns the leaves, SCROOGE leans eagerly forward, and looks at the pictures. The Spirit watches SCROOGE.*)

*Scrooge.* (*Excitedly.*) Why, it's Ali Baba! it's dear, old, honest Ali Baba! Yes, yes, I know. One Christmas time, when yonder solitary child was left here all alone, he *did* come, for the first time, just like

that. Poor boy! and Valentine, and his wild brother, Orson; there they go! And what's his name, who was put down in his drawers, asleep, at the gate of Damascus; don't you see him? And the Sultan's groom turned upside down by the Genii; there he is upon his head! Served him right! I'm glad of it! What business had *he* to be married to the princess! (*More excitedly, half laughing, half crying.*) There's the parrot! Green body and yellow tail, — there he is! 'Poor Robin Crusoe,' he called him when he came home again, after sailing round the island. Poor Robin Crusoe, where have you been, Robin Crusoe? The man thought he was dreaming, but he wasn't. It was the parrot, you know. There goes Friday, running for his life to the little creek! Halloo! Whoop! Halloo! (*Dropping his voice.*) Poor boy! (*Curtain falls slowly.*) I wish — (*puts his hand in his pocket*) — but it's too late now.

*Ghost.* (L.) What is the matter?

*Scrooge.* (R.) Nothing — nothing! There was a boy singing a Christmas carol at my door last night. I should like to have given him something, that's all.

*Ghost.* (*Smiling and waving its hand.*) Let us see another Christmas.

[*Music.* *Curtain rises on VISION II. The same room. The boy pacing the floor impatiently; a door opens, R., and a little girl enters, runs to him, and embraces him.*

*Fanny.* (R. C.) Dear, dear, brother! I have come to bring you home; to bring you home, home, home! (*Claps her hands.*)

*Eben.* (L. C.) Home, little Fan?

*Fanny.* Yes, home for good and all; home forever and ever. Father is so much kinder than he used to be, that home is like heaven. He spoke so gently to me one night when I was going to bed, that I was not afraid to ask him if you might come home, and he said, Yes, you should, and sent me in a coach to bring you. And you're to be a man! And are never to come back here; but first, we are to be together all the Christmas long, and have the merriest time in all the world.

*Eben.* You're quite a woman, little Fan! (*She claps her hands and laughs, tries to touch his head, and stands on tiptoe to embrace him. She then leads him out. Curtain.*)

*Ghost.* Always a delicate creature, whom a breath might have withered; but she had a large heart.

*Scrooge.* So she had; you're right. I will not gainsay it, Spirit. God forbid!

*Ghost.* She died a woman, and had, as I think, children.

*Scrooge.* One child.

*Ghost.* True, your nephew.

*Scrooge.* Yes.

*Ghost.* (*Pointing.*) Look! (*Curtain rises on* VISION III. *A young lady, in mourning, seated c. ; a young man stands near her.*)

*Belle.* It matters little, Eben, to you, very little. Another idol has displaced me, and if it can cheer and comfort you in time to come, as I would have tried to do, I have no just cause to grieve.

*Eben.* What idol has displaced you?

*Belle.* A golden one.

*Eben.* This is the even-handed dealing of the world! There is nothing on which it is so hard as poverty; and there is nothing it professes to condemn with such severity as the pursuit of wealth.

*Belle.* You fear the world too much. All your other hopes have merged into the hope of being beyond the chance of its sordid reproach. I have seen your nobler aspirations fall off, one by one, until the master passion, Gain, engrosses you — have I not?

*Eben.* What then? Even if I have grown so much wiser — what then? I am not changed towards you. (*She shakes her head.*) Am I?

*Belle.* Our contract is an old one. It was made when we were both poor, and content to be so, until in good season we could improve our worldly fortune by our patient industry. You *are* changed. When it was made, you were another man.

*Eben.* I was a boy.

*Belle.* Your own feeling tells you that you were not what you are. *I am.* That which promised happiness when we were one in heart, is fraught with misery now that we are two. How often and how keenly I have thought of this, I will not say. It is enough that I have thought of it, and can release you.

*Eben.* Have I ever sought release?

*Belle.* In words, no — never!

*Eben.* In what, then?

*Belle.* In a changed nature; in an altered spirit; in another atmosphere of life; another hope as its great end. In everything that made my love of any worth or value in your sight. If this had never been

between us, tell me, would you seek me out and try to win me now? Ah, no!

*Eben.* You think not.

*Belle.* I would gladly think otherwise if I could, Heaven knows! When *I* have learned a truth like this, I know how strong and irresistible it must be. If you were free to-day, to-morrow, yesterday, can even *I* believe you would choose a dowerless girl? You who, in your very confidence with her, weigh everything by Gain; or, choosing her, if for a moment you were false enough to your one guiding principle to do so, do I not know that your repentance and regret would surely follow? I do, and I release you, with a full heart, for the love of him you once were. May you be happy in the life that you have chosen. (*She turns away. Curtain.*)

*Scrooge.* Spirit, show me no more! Why do you delight to torment me?

*Ghost.* One shadow more.

*Scrooge.* No more! I wish to see no more! I cannot bear it. (*Falls into a chair, R. C., with his arms on the back, and his head resting on his arms.*)

*Ghost.* I told you that these were shadows of the things that have been. That they are what they are, do not blame me.

*Scrooge.* (*Waving his hand.*) Leave me! Leave me! haunt me no longer. (*Spirit vanishes, L. Curtain.*)



“CHRISTMAS PRESENT.”

SCENE: the same. SCROOGE, *as before, in his chair R., but not sleeping. Bell strikes one. Enter, L., GHOST OF CHRISTMAS PRESENT. (See Index.) SCROOGE hangs his head.*

*Ghost. (c.)* I am the Ghost of Christmas Present. Look upon me. (*SCROOGE looks up.*) You have never seen the like of me before!

*Scrooge.* Never.

*Ghost.* Have never walked forth with the younger members of my family; meaning (for I am very young) my elder brothers, born in these later years?

*Scrooge.* I don't think I have. I am afraid I have not. Have you had many brothers, Spirit?

*Ghost.* More than eighteen hundred.

*Scrooge. (Aside.)* A tremendous family to provide for. Spirit, show me what you will. Last night I learned a lesson, which is working now. To-night, if you have aught to teach me, let me profit by it.

*Ghost. (Pointing.)* Look! (*They retire to opposite sides of the stage. Curtain rises on VISION IV. BOB CRATCHIT'S kitchen. MRS. C., with the assistance of two or more children, laying the table.*)

*Mrs. C.* What has ever got your precious father then? and your brother, Tiny Tim? and Martha wasn't as late last Christmas Day, by half an hour.

*Martha. (Appearing at the door, c.)* Here's Martha, mother!

*Children.* Here's Martha, mother. Hurra! There's *such* a goose, Martha!

*Mrs. C.* Why, bless your heart alive, my dear, how late you are! (*Kisses her, and takes off her bonnet and shawl.*)

*Mar.* We'd a deal of work to finish up last night, and had to clear away this morning, mother.

*Mrs. C.* Well! never mind, so long as you are come. Sit ye down before the fire, my dear, and have a warm, Lord bless ye!

*Chil.* No, no, there's father coming. Hide, Martha, hide! (*She hides, L. Enter BOB CRATCHIT, c. TINY TIM, holding a crutch, sits on his shoulder.*)

*Bob.* (*Looking about.*) Why, where's our Martha?

*Mrs. C.* Not coming.

*Bob.* (*Putting TIM down.*) Not coming! Not coming, upon Christmas Day? (*MARTHA comes out and embraces her father.*)

*Mrs. C.* And how did little Tim behave?

*Bob.* As good as gold, and better. Somehow he gets thoughtful, sitting by himself so much, and thinks the strangest things you ever heard. He told me, coming home, that he hoped the people saw him in the church, because he was a cripple, and it might be pleasant to them to remember, upon Christmas Day, who made lame beggars walk and blind men see; but he is growing strong and hearty now — is little Tim.

[*BOB mixes a jug of punch. The goose is brought in, R. They place themselves at table. TINY TIM next to his father. BOB begins to carve the goose. The children strike the table with the handles of their knives, and cry "Hurra!"*]

*Remarks are made on the size, tenderness, flavor, cheapness, &c., of the goose. At last the punch is brought on and the glasses are filled.*

*Bob.* A Merry Christmas to us all, my dears! God bless us!

*All.* Merry Christmas to all—

*Tim.* God bless us, every one! (*BOB takes his hand affectionately.*)

*Scrooge.* (R.) Spirit, tell me if Tiny Tim will live.

*Ghost.* (L.) I see a vacant seat in the poor chimney corner, and a crutch without an owner, carefully preserved. If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, the child will die.

*Scrooge.* No, no! O, no, kind Spirit! Say he will be spared.

*Ghost.* If these shadows remain unaltered by the Future, none other of my race will find him here. What then? If he be like to die, he had better do it, and decrease the surplus population. (*SCROOGE hangs his head.*) Man,—if man you be in heart, not adamant, forbear that wicked cant until you have discovered what the surplus is, and where it is. Will you decide what men shall live, what men shall die?

*Bob.* (*Filling his glass.*) Mr. Scrooge! I'll give you Mr. Scrooge, the founder of the feast!

*Mrs. C.* The founder of the feast, indeed! I wish I had him here. I'd give him a piece of my mind to feast upon, and I hope he'd have a good appetite for it.

*Bob.* My dear,—the children! Christmas Day!

*Mrs. C.* It *should* be Christmas Day, I am sure, on which one drinks the health of such an odious, stingy, hard, unfeeling man as Mr. Scrooge. You know he is, Robert. Nobody knows it better than you do, poor fellow!

*Bob.* My dear, — Christmas Day!

*Mr. C.* I'll drink his health for your sake, and the Day's, not for his. Long life to him! A Merry Christmas and a Happy New Year! He'll be very merry and very happy, I've no doubt. (*They drink. Curtain falls slowly. Music, to allow time to prepare the next scene. When all is ready, hearty laughter is heard without, and the curtain rises on VISION V. Room in house of SCROOGE'S nephew, FRED. Present, FRED and his wife; his sister, and Mr. TOPPER, with other friends. They are seated about a table, on which are a decanter and glasses, and playing the game, "What is my Thought Like?"*)

*Fred. (R.)* I am thinking of an animal.

[*Here the company ask him questions in rapid succession, to each of which FRED replies, simply, Yes or No. For instance: A live animal? Ans. Yes. A disagreeable animal? Ans. Yes. A savage one? Yes. Does he growl? grunt? talk? live in — ? walk about the streets? Ans. to each, Yes. Ever made a show of? Ans. No. Ever led by anybody? No. Ever killed in a market? No. Is it a cow, a tiger, a bear, a cat, &c.? No, no, no, &c. Uproarious laughter throughout.*

*Sister.* (R. C.) I have found it out! I know what it is, Fred! I know what it is!

*Fred.* What is it?

*Sister.* It's your uncle Scro-o-o-oge!

*Fred.* Yes, it is. And what do you think he said to me yesterday? Ha, ha! Ha-ha-ha-ha! Said that Christmas was a humbug, as I live! (*Hearty laughter.*) He believed it, too!

*Wife.* (L.) More shame for him, Fred.

*Fred.* He's a comical old fellow, that's the truth. However, his offences carry their own punishment, and I have nothing to say against him.

*Wife.* I'm sure he's very rich, Fred. At least you always tell *me* so.

*Fred.* What of that, my dear? His wealth is of no use to him. He don't do any good with it. He don't make himself comfortable with it. He hasn't the satisfaction of thinking — ha, ha, ha — that he's ever going to benefit *us* with it.

*Wife.* I have no patience with him.

*Fred.* O, I have. I'm sorry for him. I couldn't be angry with him, if I tried. Who suffers by his ill whims? Himself, always. Here he takes it into his head to dislike us, and he won't come and dine with us. What's the consequence? He don't lose much of a dinner.

*Wife.* Indeed, I think he loses a very good dinner.

*Fred.* Well, I'm very glad to hear it, because I haven't any great faith in these young housekeepers. What do *you* say, Topper?

*Topper.* (L. C.) (*Laughing.*) A bachelor, Fred,

is a wretched outcast, who has no right to express an opinion on such a subject.

*Wife.* Do go on, Fred. He never finishes what he begins to say. He is such a ridiculous fellow! (*Laughter.*)

*Fred.* I was only going to say that the consequence of his taking a dislike to us, and not making merry with us, is, as I think, that he loses some pleasant moments, which could do him no harm. I am sure he loses pleasanter companions than he can find in his own thoughts, either in his mouldy old office, or his dusty chambers. I mean to give him the same chance every year, whether he likes it or not, for I pity him. He may rail at Christmas till he dies, but he can't help thinking better of it — I defy him — if he finds me going there in good temper, year after year, and saying, "Uncle Scrooge, how are you?" If it only puts him in the vein to leave his poor clerk fifty pounds, that's something; and I think I shook him yesterday. (*Laughter. He passes the bottle.*) He has given us plenty of merriment, I am sure, and it would be ungrateful not to drink his health. Here is a glass of mulled wine, ready to our hand at the moment. I say, "Uncle Scrooge!"

*All.* Well! Uncle Scrooge! (*They drink.*)

*Fred.* A Merry Christmas and Happy New Year to the old man, whatever he is! He wouldn't take it from me, but may he have it, nevertheless. Uncle Scrooge!

[SCROOGE *leans eagerly forward, as if to speak to FRED, when the FRONT curtain falls.*

“CHRISTMAS YET TO COME.”

SCENE, as before.

*Enter, L., GHOST OF CHRISTMAS YET TO COME.*  
(See Index.) *SCROOGE sinks on his knees, as the Spirit approaches him.*

*Scrooge.* (R.) I am in the presence of the Ghost of Christmas Yet To Come? (GHOST bows.) You are about to show me the shadows of the things that have not happened, but will happen in the time before us, — Is that so, Spirit? (GHOST bows. SCROOGE rises, R.) Ghost of the Future! I fear you more than any spectre I have seen. But I know your purpose is to do me good, and I hope to live to be another man from what I was. Will you not speak to me?

[GHOST, L., *points to back of stage, where the curtain is rising on VISION VI.*

*Enter, R. and L., two gentlemen.*

*Mr. A.* How are you?

*Mr. B.* How are you? (*They shake hands.*)

*Mr. A.* Well, Old Scratch has got his own at last, eh?

*Mr. B.* So I'm told. What was the matter with him? I thought he'd never die.

*Mr. A.* I don't know much about it. I only know he's dead.

*Mr. B.* When did he die?

*Mr. A.* Last night, I believe.

*Mr. B.* What has he done with his money?

*Mr. A.* (*Yawning.*) I haven't heard. Left it to his company, perhaps. He hasn't left it to me, that's all I know. (*Both laugh.*) It's likely to be a very cheap funeral, for, upon my life, I don't know of anybody to go to it. Suppose we make up a party and volunteer?

*Mr. B.* I don't mind going if a lunch is provided; but I must be fed if I make one. (*Laugh.*)

*Mr. A.* Well, I am more disinterested than that, for I never wear black gloves, and I never eat lunch. But I'll offer to go if anybody else will. When I come to think of it, I'm not at all sure that I wasn't his most particular friend; for we used to stop and speak whenever we met. Cold, isn't it! Seasonable for Christmas time. You are not a skater, I suppose?

*Mr. B.* No, no. Something else to think of. Good morning! [*Exeunt.*]

*Front curtain. Music.*

VISION VII. *A pawnbroker's shop; R., a gray-haired man behind a tattered curtain. Oil lamp on the counter before him.*

*Enter, L., two women with bundles, which they throw on the floor. They stand and stare at each other, and at JOE, and all three burst into a laugh.*

*Mrs. C.* Let the charwoman alone to be the first! Let the laundress alone to be the second! Look here, old Joe, here's a chance! If we two haven't met here without meaning it!

*Joe.* You couldn't have met in a better place — stop till I shut the door. (*Comes out.*) Ah, how it skreeks!



There ain't such a rusty bit of metal in the place as it's own hinges, I believe; and I'm sure there's no such old bones here as mine. Ha, ha! We're all suitable to our calling; we're well matched. (*The women sit down and stare at each other.*)

*Mrs. C.* (L. C.) What odds, then! What odds, Mrs. Dilber? Every person has a right to take care of themselves. *He* always did.

*Mrs. D.* (R. C.) That's true, indeed! No man more so.

*Mrs. C.* Why then, don't stare at me as if you was afraid, woman. Who's the wiser? We are not going to pick holes in each other's coats, I suppose!

*Mrs. D.* No, indeed! We should hope not.

*Mrs. C.* Very well, then! That's enough; who's the worse for the loss of a few things like these? Not a dead man, I suppose?

*Mrs. D.* (*Laughing.*) No, indeed!

*Mrs. C.* If he wanted to keep 'em after he was dead, a wicked old screw, why wasn't he natural in his lifetime? If he had been, he'd have had somebody to look after him when he was struck with death, instead of lying gasping out his last there, alone by himself.

*Mrs. D.* It's the truest word that ever was spoke. It's a judgment on him.

*Mrs. C.* I wish it was a little heavier judgment; and it should have been, you may depend upon it, if I could have laid my hands on anything else. Open that bundle, old Joc, and let me know the value of it. Speak out plain. I'm not afraid to be the first, nor afraid for her to see it. We knew pretty well that we

were helping ourselves, before we met here, I believe. It's no sin. Open the bundle. Joe. (JOE *kneels, c., and unties bundle; draws out SCROOGE'S bed curtains.*)

Joe. What do you call this? Bed curtains!

Mrs. C. (*Laughing.*) Ah, bed curtains!

Joe. You don't mean to say you took 'em down rings and all, with him lying there?

Mrs. C. Yes, I do. Why not?

Joe. You were born to make your fortune, and you'll certainly do it.

Mrs. C. I certainly shan't hold my hand, when I can get anything in it by reaching it out, for the sake of such a man as he was, I promise you, Joe. (JOE *pulls out blankets; examines them, holding lamp in one hand.*) Don't drop that oil upon the blankets, now.

Joe. His blankets?

Mrs. C. Whose else's do you think? He isn't likely to take cold without 'em, I dare say.

Joe. (*Looking up.*) I hope he didn't die of anything catching, eh?

Mrs. C. Don't you be afraid of that. I ain't so fond of his company that I'd loiter about him for such things, if he did. (JOE *holds up a shirt and examines it.*) Ah! you may look through that shirt till your eyes ache; but you won't find a hole in it, nor a threadbare place. It's the best he had, and a fine one too. They'd have wasted it, if it hadn't been for me.

Joe. What do you call wasting of it?

Mrs. C. Putting it on him to be buried in, to be sure. Somebody was fool enough to do it, but I took it off again. If calico ain't good enough for such a purpose, it isn't good enough for anything. It's quite

as becoming to the body. He can't look uglier than he did in that one. (*JOE chalks the items on the wall and sums them up.*)

*Joe.* That's your account, and I wouldn't give another sixpence if I was to be boiled for not doing it. (*To MRS. D.*) Now for you, ma'am. (*Opens her bundle and takes out sheets, wearing apparel, boots, &c., and chalks her account on the wall.*) I always give too much to ladies. It's a weakness of mine, and that's the way I ruin myself. That's *your* account. If you asked me for another penny, and made it an open question, I'd repent of being so liberal, and knock off half a crown. (*Draws flannel bag from his pocket and pays the women.*)

*Mrs. C.* Ha, ha! This is the end of it, you see! He frightened every one away from him when he was alive, to profit us when he was dead! Ha, ha, ha! (*Vision vanishes.* GHOST and SCROOGE, R.)

*Scrooge.* (*Shuddering.*) Spirit, I see, I see! The case of this unhappy man might be my own. My life tends that way, now. Good Spirit, let me see some tenderness connected with a death, or these dark scenes will be forever present to me.

*Ghost.* Follow me, then.

[*Exeunt, L. Front curtain. Music.*

*The next scene being set, curtain rises.*

*Enter GHOST, R., pointing to back of stage. SCROOGE follows — back curtain rises on VISION VIII. Room in BOB CRATCHIT'S house. MRS. C., PETER, and BELINDA seated near the fire, L. MRS. C., sewing. PETER reads from the Bible.*

*Peter.* "And he took a child, and set him in the midst of them."

*Mrs. C.* (*Laying down her work, and covering her eyes with her hand.*) The color hurts my eyes. They are better now, again. It makes them weak by candle light; and I wouldn't show weak eyes to your father when he comes home, for the world. It must be near his time.

*Peter.* (*Closing the book.*) Past it, rather; but I think he has walked a little slower than he used, these few last evenings, mother.

*Mrs. C.* I have known him walk with—I have known him walk with Tiny Tim upon his shoulder, very fast indeed—

*Peter.* And so have I, often.

*Mrs. C.* But he was very light to carry, and his father loved him so, that it was no trouble—no trouble. (*Noise outside.*) And there is your father at the door. (*Goes out, C. D., and returns with BOB, who greets the children.*)

*Bob.* (*Looking at MRS. C.'s work.*) How fast you work, my dear! They will be done long before Sunday.

*Mrs. C.* Sunday! You went to-day, then, Robert?

*Bob.* Yes, my dear, I wish you could have gone. It would have done you good to see how green a place it is; but you'll see it often. I promised him that I would walk there on a Sunday. My little, little child—(*sobs*)—my little child! (*Hurries out of the room, R., but soon returns, "bright and cheerful."*) They draw around the fire.) I met Mr. Scrooge's nephew to-day, my dear. I had never seen him but once be-

fore, but he was very kind to me, and seeing that I looked, — just a little down, you know, — inquired what had happened to distress me. On which, — for he is the pleasantest-spoken gentleman you ever heard, — I told him. “I am heartily sorry for it, Mr. Cratchit,” he said, “and heartily sorry for your good wife.” By-the-by, how he ever knew that, I don’t know.

*Mrs. C.* Knew what, my dear?

*Bob.* Why, that you were a good wife.

*Peter.* Everybody knows that.

*Bob.* Very well observed, my boy. I hope they do. “Heartily sorry,” he said, “for your good wife. If I can be of service to you in any way,” he said, giving me his card, “that’s where I live. Pray come to me.” Now it wasn’t for the sake of anything he might be able to do for us, so much as for his kind way, that this was quite delightful. It really seemed as if he had known our Tiny Tim, and felt with us.

*Mrs. C.* I’m sure he’s a good soul.

*Bob.* You would be sure of it, my dear, if you saw and spoke to him. I shouldn’t be at all surprised — mark what I say! — if he got Peter a better situation.

*Mrs. C.* Only hear that, Peter!

*Belinda.* And then Peter will be keeping company with some one, and setting up for himself.

*Peter.* (*Laughing.*) Get along with you!

*Bob.* It’s just as likely as not, one of these days; though there’s plenty of time for that, my dear. But however and whenever we part from one another, I am sure we shall none of us forget poor Tiny Tim — shall we? or this first parting that there was among us?

*All.* Never, father!

*Bob.* And I know, my dears, that when we recollect how patient and how mild he was, — although he was a little, little child, — we shall not quarrel easily among ourselves, and forget poor Tiny Tim in doing it.

*All.* No, never, father! (*Music. They cluster round and embrace him. Curtain.*)

*Scrooge.* Spectre, something informs me that our parting moment is at hand. I know it, but I know not how. Then tell me what man that was whose death has been foreshadowed by you?

*Ghost.* Behold! (*Solemn Music. Curtain rises on VISION IX. SCENE: A lonely grave,\* with a headstone bearing SCROOGE's name.*)

*Scrooge.* Merciful Heaven! What is this? (*GHOST points, without speaking.*) Before I draw near to that stone to which you point, answer me one question. Are these the shadows of the things that Will be, or are they shadows of the things that May be, only? (*GHOST still points. SCROOGE takes one or two steps towards the Vision, and stops, R. C.*) Men's courses will foreshadow certain ends to which, if persevered in, they must lead. But if the courses be departed from, the ends will change. Say it is thus with what you show me! (*GHOST, L. C., points. SCROOGE creeps towards the stone and reads aloud,*) EBENEZER SCROOGE! (*Staggers back.*) Good God! Is it then *my* death that has been foreshadowed? (*GHOST points to him, and then back to the grave.*) No,

---

\* This scene may be roughly painted, in distemper, and hung at the back of the stage.

Spirit! O, no, no! Spirit! (*Clutches at its robe.*) Hear me! I am not the man I was. I will not be the man I must have been but for this intercourse. Why show me this, if I am past all hope? (*GHOST's hand trembles. SCROOGE falls before him.*) Good Spirit, your nature intercedes for me and pities me. Assure me that I yet may change these shadows you have shown me, by an altered life! I will honor Christmas in my heart, and try to keep it all the year. I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future. The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. I will not shut out the lessons that they teach. O, tell me I may sponge away the writing on this stone!

[*Seizes the hand of the GHOST; GHOST shakes him off. SCROOGE remains on his knees, holding up his clasped hands.*  
*Tableau. Music. Curtain.*



## "NEVER TOO LATE TO MEND."

SCROOGE'S Chamber, as in SCENE II. SCROOGE (*in dressing-gown and night-cap*) asleep in his chair. He starts, wakes, sobbing violently, and stares about him.

Scrooge. (*Dreamily.*) I will live in the Past, the Present, and the Future! The Spirits of all Three shall strive within me. O Jacob Marley! Heaven (*drops on his knees*) and the Christmas time be praised for this! I say it on my knees, old Jacob; on my knees! (*Looking about him.*) Yes, this room is mine! That bed is mine! (*Rises, goes to his bed and takes hold of the curtains.*) They are not torn down, — they are not torn down rings and all. They are here. I am here. The time before me is my own to make amends in; and the shadows of the things that would have been, may be dispelled. They will be, I know they will be. (*During this soliloquy, he is hastily dressing.*) I don't know what to do (*half laughing — half crying*). I'm as light as a feather. I'm as happy as an angel. I am as merry as a school-boy. I'm as giddy as a drunken man. A Merry Christmas to everybody! A Happy New Year to all the world! Halloo, here! Whoop! Halloo! (*Jumps about the room; stops to take breath, and begins again.*) There's the saucepan that the gruel was in. There's the door by which the ghost of Jacob Marley entered. It's all right; it's all true; it all happened; ha, ha, ha! I don't know what day of the month it is. I don't know how long I've been among the Spirits. I



don't know anything. I'm quite a baby. Never mind! I don't care. I'd rather be a baby. Halloo! Whoop! Halloo, here! (*Church bells heard. He runs to window, L., opens it and puts out his head.*) Halloo, below, there! What's to-day?

*Boy.* (*Outside.*) Eh?

*Scrooge.* What's to-day, my fine fellow?

*Boy.* (*Very loud.*) To-day? Why, Christmas Day!

*Scrooge.* It's Christmas Day! I haven't missed it! The Spirits have done it all in one night. They can do anything they like. Of course they can — of course they can. (*To the boy.*) Halloo, my fine fellow!

*Boy.* Halloo!

*Scrooge.* Do you know the poulterer's in the next street but one, at the corner?

*Boy.* I should hope I did.

*Scrooge.* (*Aside.*) An intelligent boy! A remarkable boy! (*To the boy.*) Do you know whether they've sold the prize turkey that was hanging up there? — not the little prize turkey; the big one?

*Boy.* What! the one as big as me!

*Scrooge.* (*Aside.*) What a delightful boy! It's a pleasure to talk to him. (*To boy.*) Yes, my buck!

*Boy.* It's hanging there now.

*Scrooge.* Is it? Go and buy it!

*Boy.* Walk-ER!

*Scrooge.* No, no, I'm in earnest! Go and buy it, and tell them to bring it here, that I may give them the directions where to take it. Come back with the man, and I'll give you a shilling. Come back with him in less than five minutes, and I'll give you half a

crown. (*Rubs his hands and whispers.*) I'll send it to Bob Cratchit's. He shan't know who sent it. It's twice the size of Tiny Tim. Joe Miller never made such a joke as sending it to Bob's will be. (*Writes on a card and goes to window again.*) Here's the turkey. Halloo! Whoop! How are you! Merry Christmas! Why, it's impossible to carry that to Camden Town.\* You must have a cab. (*Chuckles.*) Here, my boy; here's your half crown. (*Chuckles.*) And here's the address. (*Throws out card. — Chuckles.*) And here's the money for the turkey. (*Throws it out.*) And this is to pay for the cab. (*Throws out more money; chuckles, falls exhausted into his chair and laughs till he cries; rises again.*) And now I'll go and dine with Fred, if he'll let me in. What a surprise I shall give him! What a surprise it will be to him! (*Exit. Curtain.*)

---

\* The name of any town in the vicinity of the place in which this piece is played, may be substituted here.

## “THE END OF IT ALL.”

SCENE: SCROOGE'S Office. SCROOGE *at his desk.*  
*Clock points at 9.15.*

*Scrooge.* Quarter past nine and Bob not here yet! Ah, I thought I should catch him. (*Writes; then looks at clock, or takes out his watch.*) Eighteen minutes past nine, and — (*Enter BOB in great haste.*) Halloo! What do you mean by coming here at this time of day, Bob? (*Takes off hat and shawl, hangs them up, climbs on his stool, and begins to write very fast.*)

*Bob.* I am very sorry, sir. I *am* behind my time.

*Scrooge.* You are! Yes, I think you are. Step this way, sir, if you please.

*Bob.* (*Appearing at his door.*) It's only once a year, sir. It shall not be repeated. I was making rather merry yesterday, sir.

*Scrooge.* Now, I'll tell you what, my friend, I am not going to stand this sort of thing any longer. And therefore — (*Jumps off his stool and gives BOB a “dig in the ribs”*) — and, therefore, I'm about to raise your salary! (*BOB trembles, moves off, and seizes his ruler. SCROOGE claps him on the back.*) A Merry Christmas, Bob! A merrier Christmas, Bob, my good fellow, than I have given you for many a year! I'll raise your salary, and endeavor to assist your struggling family, and we will discuss your affairs this very afternoon over a Christmas bowl of smoking bishop, Bob. Make up the fires, and buy another coal scuttle before you dot another i, Bob Cratchit. (*Curtain.*)



THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH



## THE CRICKET ON THE HEARTH.

[*For a description of characters and costumes, see Index, at the end of this volume.*]

---

### THE CARRIER.

SCENE: Kitchen of JOHN PEERYBINGLE, *the Carrier*.

*At back, a door; left of door, a window; L., two doors; C., a table spread for two persons; R. C., a cradle; R. a fireplace; kettle boiling on the hob; R. MRS. P., having made all preparations for tea, takes the baby from the cradle. At that moment, enter JOHN, C. D., with Boxer, his dog. He shakes the moisture from his cloak, throws down his hat, and embraces DOT.*

*Dot.* O, goodness, John! What a state you're in with the weather!

*John.* (*Taking off his shawl and warming his hands.*) Why, you see, Dot, it, — it ain't exactly summer weather. So, no wonder!

*Dot.* (*Pouting.*) I wish you wouldn't call me Dot, John. I don't like it.

*John.* Why, what else are you? A dot, and — (*glancing at baby*), a dot and carry, — I won't say it, for fear I should spoil it; but I was very near a joke. I don't know as ever I was nearer.

*Dot.* (c.) (*Holding up the baby.*) Ain't he beautiful, John? Don't he look precious in his sleep?

*John.* (c.) Very precious, very much so. He generally *is* asleep — ain't he?

*Dot.* Lor, John! Good gracious, no!

*John.* (*Pondering.*) O! I thought his eyes was generally shut, — Halloo!

*Dot.* Goodness, John, how you startle one!

*John.* It ain't right for him to turn 'em up in that way! Is it? See how he's winking with both of 'em at once. And look at his mouth! Why, he's gasping like a gold and silver fish.

*Dot.* (*With much dignity.*) You don't deserve to be a father — you don't. But how should you know what little complaints children are troubled with, John? You wouldn't so much as know their names, you stupid fellow. (*Pinches his ear.*)

*John.* (*Pulling off his over-coat.*) No, it's very true, Dot. I don't know much about it. I only know that I've been fighting pretty stiffly with the wind to-night. It's been blowing north-east, straight into the cart, the whole way home.

*Dot.* Poor old man, so it has! (*Enter, L., TILLY SLOWBOY.*) Here, take the precious darling, Tilly, while I make myself of some use. Bless it, I could smother it with kissing it, — I could. Hie, then, good dog! Hie, Boxer, boy! (*Bustling about.*) Only let me make the tea first, John, and then I'll help you with the parcels, like a busy bee. "How doth the little," — and all the rest of it, you know, John. Did you ever learn: "How doth the little," — when you went to school, John?



*John.* Not to quite know it. I was very near it once. But I should only have spoilt it, I dare say.

*Dot.* Ha, ha, ha! what a dear old darling of a dunce you are, John, to be sure. (*Exit JOHN.*) There! There's the tea-pot ready on the hob! And there's the cold knuckle of ham; and there's the butter; and there's the crusty loaf, and all! And here's a clothes-basket for the small parcels, John, if you've got any there. Where are you, John? Don't let the dear child fall under the grate, Tilly, whatever you do!

[*Exit DOT, C. D., taking the basket.*]

*Re-enter, C., DOT with JOHN bringing in the basket filled with parcels. Cricket chirps.\* They place basket on the floor, L.*

*John.* Heyday! It's merrier than ever to-night, I think.

*Dot.* And it's sure to bring us good fortune, John. It always has done so. To have a cricket on the hearth is the luckiest thing in all the world! The first time I heard its cheerful little note, John, was on that night when you brought me home — when you brought me to my new home here; it's little mistress, nearly a year ago. You recollect, John?

*John.* O, yes, I should *think* so!

*Dot.* Its chirp was such a welcome to me! It seemed so full of promise and encouragement. It seemed to say, you would be kind and gentle with me and would not expect (I had a fear of that, John, then) to find an old head on the shoulders of your foolish

---

\* Prompter will use a "bird-call" whistle for the cricket.

little wife. (JOHN *pats her on the head and then on the shoulder.*) It spoke the truth, John, when it seemed to say so ; for you have ever been the best of husbands to me. This has been a happy home, John, and I love the cricket for its sake.

*John.* Why, so do I, then ; so do I, Dot.

[DOT *lays her hand on his arm and looks into his face, then goes down on her knees, L., before the basket, and examines the parcels.*

*Dot.* There are not many of them to-night, John ; but I saw some goods behind the cart just now ; and though they give more trouble, perhaps, still they pay as well ; so we have no reason to grumble — have we ? Besides, you have been delivering, I dare say, as you came along ?

*John.* (*Seated before the fire, R.*) O, yes, a good many.

*Dot.* Why, what's this round box ! Heart alive, John, it's a wedding cake !

*John.* Leave a woman alone to find out that ! Now a man would never have thought of it, whereas it's my belief that if you was to pack a wedding cake up in a tea chest, or a turn-up bedstead, or a pickled salmon keg, or any unlikely thing, a woman would be sure to find it out directly. Yes ; I called for it at the pastry cook's.

*Dot.* (*Trying to lift it.*) And it weighs, I don't know what — whole hundred weights ! Whose is it, John ? Where is it going ?

*John.* Read the writing on the other side.

*Dot.* Why, John ! My goodness, John !

*John.* Ah, who'd have thought it?

*Dot.* (*Sitting on the floor, and shaking her head.*) You never mean to say that it's Gruff & Tackleton, the toy-maker. (*JOHN nods; DOT nods, and gazes at JOHN in astonishment.*)

*Tilly.* (*L. C. Trotting the baby.*) Was it Gruff's & Tackleton's, the toy-makers, then, and Would it call at pastry cooks for wedding cakes, and Did it's mothers know the boxes when its fathers brought them home.

*Dot.* And that is really to come about! Why, she and I were girls at school together, John. And he's as old! as unlike her! Why, how many years older than you, is Gruff & Tackleton, John?

*John.* How many more cups of tea shall I drink to-night at one sitting, than Gruff & Tackleton ever took in four, I wonder? (*Draws up to table.*) As to eating, I eat but little, but that little I enjoy, Dot.

[*DOT stands thoughtfully near the basket, pushing the cake-box with her foot. JOHN calls to her; raps on the table with his knife; then rises, and going to her, touches her on the shoulder. She starts, laughs, and takes her place at table.*

*Dot.* So these are all the parcels, are they, John?

*John.* That's all. (*Lays down his knife and fork and draws a long breath.*) Why — no — I — I declare — I've clean forgotten the old gentleman!

*Dot.* The old gentleman?

*John.* In the cart. He was asleep among the straw, the last time I saw him. I've very nearly re-

membered him twice since I came in; but he went out of my head again. (*Rises and hurries to the door, c., candle in hand.*) Halloa! Ya-hip, there! Rouse up! That's my hearty!

*Enter old gentleman, c.*

You're such an undeniable good sleeper, sir, that I have half a mind to ask you where the other six are,—only that would be a joke, and I know I should spoil it. (*Aside.*) Very near, though—very near! (*Stranger bows to DOT, and takes a seat near the fire, R.*) I found him sitting by the roadside, upright as a milestone, and almost as deaf!

*Dot.* (*At table.*) Sitting in the open air, John?

*John.* (L. c.) In the open air, just at dusk. "Carriage paid," he said, and gave me eighteen pence. Then he got in, and there he is.

*Stranger.* If you please, I was to be left till called for. Don't mind me. (*Takes a book and spectacles from his pocket and reads.* DOT and JOHN exchange glances. *Stranger looking from DOT to JOHN.*) Your daughter, my good friend?

*John.* (*At table.*) Wife.

*Stran.* Niece?

*John.* (*Very loud.*) Wife!

*Stran.* Indeed! Surely? Very young! (*Reads again.*) Baby, yours? (JOHN nods.) Girl?

*John.* (*Roars.*) Bo-o-oy!

*Stran.* Also very young, eh?

*Dot.* (c. *Quickly and very loud.*) Two months and three da-ays. Vaccinated just six weeks ago-o! Took very fine-ly! Considered by the doctor a remarkably

beautiful chi-ild! Takes notice in a way quite wonderful! May seem impossible to you, but feels his legs al-ready! (*Holds up the baby. TILLY dances around them.*)

*John.* Hark! He is called for, sure enough. There's somebody at the door. Open it, Tilly. (*Door opens, c.*)

*Enter CALEB PLUMMER.*

*Caleb.* (R. c.) Good evening, John! Good evening, mum! Good evening, Tilly! Good evening, Unbeknown! How's baby, mum? Boxer's pretty well, I hope?

*Dot.* All thriving, Caleb. I'm sure you need only look at the dear child, for one, to know that.

*Caleb.* And I am sure I need only look at you for another; or at John for another; or at Tilly, as far as that goes. Or certainly at Boxer.

*John.* Busy just now, Caleb?

*Caleb.* Why, pretty well, John. Pretty much so. There's rather a run on Noah's Arks at present. I could have wished to improve upon the Family, but I don't see how it's to be done at the price. It would be a satisfaction to one's mind to make it clearer which was Shems and Hams, and which was wives. Flies ain't on that scale, neither, as compared with elephants, you know. Ah, well! Have you got anything in the parcel line for me, John?

*John.* (*Takes from his pocket a very small flower-pot; removes the wrappings.*) There it is! Not so much as a leaf damaged. Full of buds!

*Caleb.* (*Taking flower-pot.*) Thank you, John!

*John.* Dear, Caleb, — very dear, at this season.

*Caleb.* Never mind that ; it would be cheap to me, whatever it cost. Anything else, John?

*John.* (*Rising.*) A small box. (*Taking it from his pocket.*) Here you are !

*Caleb.* (*Taking it and spelling out the address.*) "For Caleb Plummer — with cash." With cash, John? I don't think it's for me !

*John.* (*Looking over his shoulder.*) With care. Where do you make out cash?

*Caleb.* O, to be sure ! It's all right. With care ! Yes, yes, that's mine. It might have been with cash, indeed, if my dear boy in the golden South Americas had lived, John. You loved him like a son — didn't you? You needn't say you did. I know, of course. Caleb Plummer — with care. Yes, yes ; it's all right. It's a box of dolls' eyes for my daughter's work. I wish it was her *own* sight in a box, John.

*John.* I wish it was, or<sup>d</sup> could be.

*Caleb.* Thank'ee. You speak very hearty. To think that she should never see the dolls, and them a-staring at her, so bold, all day long ! That's where it cuts. What's the damage, John?

*John.* I'll damage you, if you inquire. Dot, very near? Did I come very near?

*Caleb.* Well, it's like you to say so ; it's your kind way. Let me see, I think that's all.

*John.* I think not ; try again.

*Caleb.* Something for our governor, eh? To be sure ! That's what I came for. But my head's so running on them arks and things ! He hasn't been here --- has he?

*John.* Not he. He's too busy courting.

*Caleb.* He's coming round, though, for he told me to keep on the near side of the road, going home, and it was ten to one he'd take me up. I'd better go. By-the-by, you couldn't have the goodness to let me pinch Boxer's tail, mum, for half a moment — could you?

*Dot.* Why, Caleb, what a question!

*Caleb.* O, never mind, mum. He mightn't like it, perhaps. There's a small order just come in for barking dogs, and I should wish to go as close to natur' as I could for sixpence. That's all; never mind, mum.

*[Shoulders the large box and goes towards the door.]*

*Enter TACKLETON, C.*

*Tackleton.* (*To Caleb.*) O, you're here, are you? Wait a bit! I'll take you home. John Peerybingle, my service to you. More of my service to your pretty wife. (*Crosses to L., and stands with hat over his eyes and his hands in his pockets, looking at Dot.*) Handsomer every day! Better, too, if possible! (*Aside.*) And younger, that's the devil of it.

*[Caleb sits down on the cake-box and goes to sleep, near the door, c.]*

*Dot.* I should be astonished at your paying compliments, Mr. Tackleton, but for your condition.

*Tac.* You know all about it, then?

*Dot.* I have got myself to believe it, somehow.

*Tac.* After a hard struggle, I suppose?

*Dot.* Very.

*[Gives baby to TILLY, who sits with it near cradle. Dot takes a seat near the fire, facing stranger. Leans her head on her hand and looks at fire.]*



*Tac.* (L.) In three days' time. Next Thursday. The last day of the first month in the year. That's my wedding day. (*Rattles his money in his pocket.*) That's my wedding day!

*John.* (*Crossing to L.*) Why, it's our wedding day, too!

*Tac.* Ha, ha! Odd! You're just such another couple. Just! (*Nudges JOHN with his elbow.*) I say! A word with you. (*Leads him one side, L.*) You'll come to the wedding! We're in the same boat, you know.

*John.* How in the same boat?

*Tac.* (*Nudging him.*) A little disparity, you know. Come and spend an evening with us, beforehand.

*John.* Why?

*Tac.* Why? That's a new way of receiving an invitation. Why, for pleasure, — sociability, you know, and all that.

*John.* I thought you were never sociable.

*Tac.* Tchah! It's of no use to be anything but free with you, I see. Why then, the truth is, you have a — what tea-drinking people call a sort of a comfortable appearance together, you and your wife. *We* know better, you know, but —

*John.* No, we don't know better. What are you talking about?

*Tac.* Well, we don't know better, then. We'll agree that we don't. As you like, what does it matter? I was going to say, as you have that sort of appearance, your company will produce a favorable effect on Mrs. Tackleton, that will be. And, though



I don't think your good lady is very friendly to me, in this matter, still she can't help herself from falling into my views, for there's a compactness and cosiness of appearance about her that always tells, even in an indifferent case. You'll say you'll come?

*John.* We have arranged to keep our wedding day (as far as that goes) at home. We've made the promise to ourselves these six months. We think, you see, that home —

*Tac.* Bah! What's home? Four walls and a ceiling. (*Cricket chirps.*) Why don't you kill that cricket? I would. I always do. I hate their noise. There are four walls and a ceiling at my house. Come to me.

*John.* You kill your crickets, eh?

*Tac.* (*Setting his heel on the ground.*) Scrunch 'em, sir! You'll say you'll come? It's as much your interest as mine, you know, that the women should persuade each other that they're quiet and contented, and couldn't be better off. I know their way. Whatever one woman says, another woman is determined to clinch, always. There's that spirit of emulation among 'em, sir, that if your wife says to my wife, "I'm the happiest woman in the world, and mine's the best husband in the world, and I dote on him," my wife will say the same to yours, or more, and half believe it.

*John.* Do you mean to say she don't, then?

*Tac.* Don't? Don't what? (*Winking at him.*)

*John.* Don't believe it? (*Eying him hard.*)

*Tac.* (*Laughing.*) Ah! you dog, you're joking! I have the humor, sir, to marry a young wife, and a

pretty wife. I'm able to gratify that humor, and I do. It's my whim. But — now look there! (*Points to DOT. JOHN, perplexed, looks at her, then at TACKLETON; back at DOT, and then at TACKLETON again.*) She honors and obeys, no doubt, you know, and that, as I am not a man of sentiment, is quite enough for *me*. But do you think there's anything more in it?

*John.* I think that I should chuck any man out of the window who said there wasn't.

*Tac.* (*Quickly.*) Exactly so. To be sure! Doubtless you would. Of course, — I'm certain of it. Good night! Pleasant dreams! (*JOHN looks troubled. TACKLETON speaks compassionately.*) Good night, my dear friend, I'm off. We're exactly alike in reality, I see. You won't give us to-morrow evening? Well! Next day, you go out visiting, I know. I'll meet you there, and bring my wife that is to be. It will do her good. You're agreeable? Thank'ee! (*DOT gives a loud cry, and rising from her chair, gazes at stranger, who has risen and stands facing her.*) What's that?

*John.* Dot! Mary! Darling! What's the matter? (*All cluster, R. C., about her. CALEB wakes, starts up and seizes TILLY by the hair, and immediately apologizes. JOHN takes DOT in his arms.*) Mary, are you ill? What is it? Tell me, dear!

[*DOT beats her hands together, and falls into a fit of laughter. She then sinks on the floor, and, covering her face with her apron, sobs; then laughs and cries alternately.*

*Dot.* O, John, how cold I am!

[*He leads her to the fire, where she resumes her former place and attitude. The stranger does not move.*

I'm better, John. I'm quite well, now. I—John! Only a fancy, John, dear; a kind of shock, — a something coming suddenly before my eyes. I don't know what it was. It's quite gone — quite gone.

*Tac.* (L.) (*Looking suspiciously about.*) I'm glad it's gone. (*Aside.*) I wonder where it's gone, and what it was. Humph! Caleb, come here! Who's that with the gray hair?

*Caleb.* (*Whispering.*) I don't know, sir. Never see him before in all my life. A beautiful figure for a nut-cracker! Quite a new model! With a screw-jaw, opening down into his waistcoat, he'd be lovely.

*Tac.* Not ugly enough.

*Caleb.* (*Contemplatively.*) Or for a match-box, either. What a model! Unscrew his head to put the matches in; turn him heels up'ards for the light; and what a match-box for a gentleman's mantel-shelf, just as he stands!

*Tac.* Not half ugly enough. Nothing in him at all. Come, bring that box. (*Turning to Dot.*) All right now, I hope?

*Dot.* O, quite gone, quite gone. (*Waving TACKLETON away.*) Good night!

*Tac.* (*Near door, c.*) Good night! Good night, John Peerybingle! Take care how you carry that box, Caleb. Let it fall and I'll murder you. (*Opens door.*)

Dark as pitch, and weather worse than ever, eh?  
Good night!

[*Exit TACKLETON, C., followed by CALEB, with the cake-box on his head.*]

*John.* (*To DOT, looking towards stranger.*) He don't belong to them, you see! I must give him a hint to go.

*Stranger.* (*Approaching him.*) I beg your pardon, friend, the more so as I fear your wife has not been well. But the attendant, whom my infirmity (*touches his ear*) renders almost indispensable, not having arrived, I fear there must be some mistake. The bad night which made the shelter of your comfortable cart so acceptable, is still as bad as ever. Would you, in your kindness, suffer me to rent a bed here?

*Dot.* (*Quickly.*) Yes, yes, yes, certainly!

*John.* (*Surprised.*) O! — well, I don't object. But still, I'm not quite sure that —

*Dot.* (*Rising.*) Hush, dear John!

*John.* Why, he's stone deaf.

*Dot.* (*Crossing to L.*) I know he is, but — (*to stranger.*) Yes, sir, certainly! Yes, certainly (*to JOHN*). I'll make him up a bed directly, John. (*Hurries off, L. JOHN looks after in astonishment.*)

*Tilly.* (*Trotting the baby.*) Did its mothers make it up a beds then, and did its hair grow brown and curly when its caps was lifted off, and frighten it, a precious pets, a-sitting by the fires!

*John.* (*Pacing the room, repeating.*) And frightened it a precious pets, a-sitting by the fires. What frightened Dot, I wonder?

*Dot.* (*Entering, L.*) Your room is ready, sir.  
(*Exit stranger, L., with candle. JOHN sits near fire.*  
*Dot fills JOHN's pipe.*) I feel quite well again, John.  
quite well.

[*Dot brings a low stool, places it at his  
feet, sits down, lights his pipe and gives  
it to him. Tableau. Cricket chirps.*  
*Curtain.*

## THE BLIND GIRL.

SCENE: Room of CALEB PLUMMER, *the toy-maker, at back a door and window; the room is in a very dilapidated condition, and the furniture, scanty and poor. All kinds of toys, in different stages of completion, lie about the room, and hang on the walls. On a clothes-line, L., upper corner, is hung a coarse sackcloth coat, on the back of which is to be seen, in large letters "G. & T. — Glass."* CALEB, *seated at a bench, R., is at work on a toy house. BERTHA, seated on a low stool, C., is making dolls' dresses.*

*Bertha.* So you were out in the rain last night, father, in your beautiful new coat?

*Caleb.* (R.) In my beautiful, new great-coat.

*Ber.* How glad I am you bought it, father!

*Caleb.* And of such a tailor, too. Quite a fashionable tailor. It's too good for me.

*Ber.* (*Resting from her work, and laughing.*) Too good, father! What can be too good for you?

*Caleb.* (*Watching her sharply.*) I'm half ashamed to wear it, though, upon my word! When I hear the boys and people say behind me, "Halloo! Here's a swell!" I don't know which way to look. And when the beggar wouldn't go away last night, — and when I said I was a very common man, — said "No, your honor! Bless your honor, don't say that!" I was quite ashamed. I really felt as if I hadn't a right to wear it.

*Bertha.* (*Clasping her hands.*) I see you, father, as plainly as if I had the eyes I never want when you are with me. A blue coat —

*Caleb.* Bright blue.

*Ber.* Yes, yes! Bright blue! The color I can just remember in the blessed sky! You told me it was blue before. A bright blue coat —

*Caleb.* Made loose to the figure.

*Ber.* (*Laughing heartily.*) Yes! loose to the figure! And in it, you, dear father, with your merry eye, your smiling face, your free step, and your dark hair — looking so young and handsome!

*Caleb.* Hallo! Hallo! I shall be vain presently.

*Ber.* I think you are already. I know you, father! (*Pointing at him.*) Ha, ha, ha! I've found you out, you see!

*Caleb.* (*Stepping back and looking at his work.*) There we are! As near the real thing as sixpenn'orth of half-pence is to sixpence. What a pity that the whole front of the house opens at once! If there was only a staircase in it, now, and regular doors to the rooms to go in at! But that's the worst of my calling, I'm always deluding myself, and swindling myself. (*Takes his seat and resumes work.*)

*Ber.* You are speaking quite softly. You are not tired, father?

*Caleb.* Tired! What should tire me, Bertha? I was never tired. What does it mean? (*Sings.*)

*Enter TACKLETON, C.*

*Tac.* What! You're singing, are you? Go it! I can't sing. I can't afford to sing. I'm glad *you* can.

I hope you can afford to work, too. (CALEB *rises and stands by his bench, facing up the stage.*) Hardly time for both, I should think?

Caleb. (*Whispering.*) If you could only see him, Bertha, how he's winking at me! Such a man to joke! You'd think, if you didn't know him, he was in earnest — wouldn't you now?

[BERTHA *smiles and nods.* TACKLETON *remains at back, examining toys.*

Tac. (*Grumbling.*) The bird that can sing, and won't sing, must be made to sing, they say. What about the owl that can't sing, and oughtn't to sing, and will sing; is there anything that *he* should be made to do?

Caleb. (*Whispers to BERTHA.*) The extent to which he's winking at this moment. O, my gracious!

Ber. Always merry and light-hearted with us!

Tac. O! You're there, are you? (*Aside.*) Poor idiot! (*Comes down to BERTHA.*) Well, and being there, — how are you?

Ber. Oh! well; quite well. And as happy as even you can wish me to be; as happy as you would make the whole world, if you could!

Tac. (*Aside.*) Poor idiot! No gleam of reason. Not a gleam. (BERTHA *seizes his hand and kisses it.*) What's the matter now?

Ber. I stood it close beside my pillow when I went to sleep last night, and remembered it in my dreams. And when the day broke, and the glorious red sun, — the *red* sun, father? (TACKLETON *goes to L.*)

Caleb. Red in the mornings and the evenings, Bertha.



*Ber.* (c.) When it rose, and the bright light I almost fear to strike myself against in walking, came into the room, I turned the little tree towards it, and blessed Heaven for making things so precious, and blessed you for sending them to cheer me!

*Tac.* (*Seated, L. Aside.*) Bedlam broke loose! We shall arrive at the strait waistcoat and mufflers soon. We're getting on! Bertha, come here.

*Ber.* O, I can come straight to you! You needn't guide me. (*Rises and goes to him.*)

*Tac.* Shall I tell you a secret, Bertha?

*Ber.* (*Eagerly.*) If you will.

*Tac.* This is the day on which little what's-her-name, the spoilt child, Peerybingle's wife, pays her regular visit to you, — makes her fantastic picnic here, — ain't it?

*Ber.* Yes, this is the day.

*Tac.* I thought so. I should like to join the party.

*Ber.* Do you hear that, father?

*Caleb.* Yes, yes, I hear it; (*aside*) but I don't believe it. It's one of my lies, I've no doubt.

*Tac.* You see I — I want to bring the Peerybingles a little more into company with May Fielding. I am going to be married to May —

*Ber.* (*Starting back.*) Married!

*Tac.* (*Aside.*) She's such a con-founded idiot that I was afraid she'd never comprehend me. Ah, Bertha! Married! Church, parson, clerk, beadle, glass-coach, bells, breakfast, bridecake, favors, marrow-bones, cleavers, and all the rest of the tomfoolery. A wedding, you know! A wedding! Don't you know what a wedding is?

*Ber.* (*Gently.*) I know. I understand!

*Tac.* Do you? (*Aside.*) It's more than I expected. Well! On that account I want to join the party, and to bring May and her mother. I'll send in a little something or other, before the afternoon. A cold leg of mutton, or some comfortable trifle of that sort. You'll expect me?

*Ber.* Yes. (*Turns and goes up the stage, R.*)

*Tac.* (*Aside.*) I don't think you will, for you seem to have forgotten all about it already. Caleb!

*Caleb.* (*Aside.*) I may venture to say I'm here, I suppose. (*Aloud.*) Sir!

*Tac.* Take care she don't forget what I've been saying to her. (*Goes towards door, C.*)

*Caleb.* She never forgets. It's one of the few things she ain't clever in.

*Tac.* (*Aside.*) Every man thinks his own geese swans. Poor devil!

[*Exit TACKLETON. CALEB resumes his work. BERTHA returns to her seat by his side and takes her sewing again. A pause.*]

*Ber.* (*Sorrowfully.*) Father, I'm lonely in the dark. I want my eyes, — my patient, willing eyes.

*Caleb.* (*Leaving his work and drawing his chair near her, C.*) Here they are. Always ready. They are more yours than mine, Bertha, any hour in the four-and-twenty. What shall your eyes do for you, dear?

*Ber.* Look round the room, father.

*Caleb.* (*Looking about.*) All right! No sooner said than done, Bertha.

*Ber.* Tell me about it.

*Caleb.* It's much the same as usual. Homely, but very snug. The gay colors on the walls; the bright flowers on the plates and dishes; the shining wood, where there are beams or panels; the general cheerfulness and neatness of the building, make it very pretty.

*Ber.* (*Touching him.*) You have your working-dress on, and are not so gallant as when you wore the handsome coat!

*Caleb.* Not quite so gallant. Pretty brisk, though.

*Ber.* (*Draws nearer, and puts one arm around his neck.*) Father, tell me something about May. She is very fair?

*Caleb.* She is, indeed!

*Ber.* (*Thoughtfully.*) Her hair is dark — darker than mine. Her voice is sweet and musical, I know. I have often loved to hear it. Her shape —

*Caleb.* There's not a doll's in all the room to equal it. And her eyes! — (*Checks himself, and hums a tune.*)

*Ber.* Our friend, father; our benefactor. I am never tired, you know, of hearing about him. Now, was I ever?

*Caleb.* (*Uneasily.*) Of course not, and with reason.

*Ber.* Ah! With how much reason! Then tell me again about him, dear father. Many times again! His face is benevolent, kind, and tender. Honest and true, I am sure it is. The manly heart that tries to cloak all favors with a show of roughness and unwillingness, beats in its every look and glance.

*Caleb.* (*Desperately.*) And makes it noble.

*Ber.* And makes it noble ! He is older than May, father ?

*Caleb.* Ye-es. He's a little older than May. But that don't signify.

*Ber.* O, father, yes ! To be his patient companion in infirmity and age ; to be his gentle nurse in sickness, and his constant friend in suffering and sorrow ; to know no weariness in working for his sake ; to watch him, tend him, sit beside his bed and talk to him awake, and pray for him asleep ; what privileges these would be ! What opportunities for proving all her truth and her devotion to him ! Would she do all this, dear father ?

*Caleb.* No doubt of it.

*Ber.* I love her, father ; I can love her from my soul. (*Lays her head on his shoulder and weeps.*)

[*Curtain, — or continue as follows : —*

*Enter, C.D., MR. and MRS. PEERYBINGLE, carrying baskets and parcels, which they deposit at back ; they are followed by TILLY, with the baby ; Boxer brings up the rear ; exchange of salutations ; TILLY places baby in cot, R., up the stage ; DOT, BERTHA, and TILLY spread the table ; general conversation. Enter TACKLETON, accompanied by MRS. FIELDING and MAY, and followed by a man with bundles ; greetings. Exit man ; MRS. FIELDING and TACKLETON sit, L. ; CALEB and JOHN, R. ; dinner being ready, TACKLETON leads MRS. FIELDING to the post of honor ; the rest seat themselves as below.*

## BERTHA'S PICNIC.

SCENE, the same. *c. A table, laid for dinner. At head of table is seated DOT; on her right, MRS. FIELDING; on her left, MAY; next to MRS. F., TACKLETON; next to MAY, BERTHA, by whom sits CALEB; at foot, JOHN PEERYBINGLE. Up the stage, R., a cot, in which is the baby. TILLY seated by it.*

*Dot.* Ah, May! Dear, dear, what changes! To talk of those merry school-days makes one young again.

*Tackleton.* Why, you ain't particularly old, at any time — are you?

*Dot.* Look at my sober, plodding husband there! He adds twenty years to my age, at least. Don't you, John?

*John.* Forty!

*Dot.* (*Laughing.*) How many *you'll* add to May's, I'm sure I don't know. But she can't be much less than a hundred years of age on her next birthday.

*Tac.* (*Savagely.*) Ha, ha!

*Dot.* Dear, dear! On'y to remember how we used to talk, at school, about the husbands we would choose! I don't know how young, and how handsome, and how gay, and how lively mine was not to be! And as to May's! Ah, dear! I don't know whether to laugh or cry, when I think what silly girls we were. Even the very persons themselves — real live young men — we fixed on sometimes. We little thought how things would come about. I never fixed on John, I'm sure. I never so much as thought of him. And if I had ~~wls~~

you you were ever to be married to Mr. Tackleton, why, you'd have slapped me — wouldn't you, May?

*Tac.* (*Laughing boisterously.*) You couldn't help yourselves, for all that. You couldn't resist us, you see. Here we are! Here we are! Where are your gay young bridegrooms now?

*Dot.* Some of them are dead, and some of them forgotten. Some of them, if they could stand among us at this moment, would not believe we were the same creatures; would not believe that what they saw and heard was real, and we *could* forget them so. No! They would not believe one word of it!

*John.* (*Gently.*) Why, Dot, little woman!

*Mrs. Fielding.* Well, well! Girls are girls, and by-gones, by-gones; and so long as young people are young and thoughtless, they will probably conduct themselves like young and thoughtless persons. I thank Heaven I have always found in my daughter May, a dutiful and obedient child, for which I take no credit to myself, though I have every reason to believe it is entirely owing to me. That Mr. Tackleton is, in an eligible point of view, a son-in-law to be desired, no one in their senses can doubt. (*A pause.*) The general result of my observation and experience is, that those marriages in which there is least of what is romantically called love, are always the happiest; and I anticipate the greatest amount of bliss from the approaching nuptials of to-morrow.

*John.* (*Raising his glass.*) I propose: To-morrow! The Wedding Day! (*They drink.* JOHN *raises and puts on his overcoat.*) Good-by! I shall be back before long. Good-by, all!

[BERTHA, *leaving the table, comes down*

*and sits, L. CALEB rises and watches her anxiously from L. C.*

*Caleb. (Abstractedly.)* Good-by, John!

*John. (Bending over cot, R.)* Good-by, young shaver! *(Kisses the child.)* Good-by! Time will come, I suppose, when *you'll* turn out into the cold, my little friend, and leave your old father to enjoy his pipe and his rheumatics in the chimney corner; eh? Where's Dot?

*Dot. (Starting.)* I'm here, John.

*John. (Clapping his hands.)* Come, come! Where's the pipe?

*Dot.* I quite forgot the pipe, John!

*John.* Forgot the pipe! *You* forget the pipe!

*Dot.* I'll — I'll fill it directly. It's soon done.

*[Takes the pipe from his coat pocket, and clumsily fills and lights it. TACKLETON watches her sharply.]*

*John.* Why, what a clumsy Dot you are to-day! I could have done it better myself, I verily believe!

*[Exit JOHN, C., followed by TACKLETON.]*

*Caleb. (Approaching BERTHA, L., and speaking in a low tone.)* Bertha! what has happened? How changed you are, my darling, in a few hours. *You* silent and dull all day! What is it? Tell me!

*Ber. (Bursting into tears.)* O, father, father! O, my hard, hard fate!

*Caleb.* But think how cheerful and how happy you have been, Bertha! How good, and how much loved, by many people.

*Ber.* That strikes me to the heart, dear father! Always so mindful of me! Always so kind to me!



*Caleb.* (*Hesitatingly.*) To be — to be blind, Bertha, my poor dear, is a great affliction; but —

*Ber.* I have never felt it! I have never felt it, in its fulness, never! I have sometimes wished that I could see you, or could see him — only once, dear father, only for one little minute — that I might know what it is I treasure up, and (*laying her hands on her breast*) hold here; that I might be sure I have it right. But I have never had these feelings long. They have passed away, and left me tranquil and contented.

*Caleb.* And they will again.

*Ber.* But, father! O, my good, gentle father, bear with me, if I am wicked! This is not the sorrow that weighs me down! Bring her to me. I cannot hold it closed and shut within myself. Bring her to me, father. (*He hesitates.*) May. Bring May!

[MAY, *hearing her, comes down and touches her on the arm.* CALEB *withdraws to R.*

*May.* Bertha!

*Ber.* (*Turning and taking both her hands.*) May! Look into my face, dear heart! Sweet heart! Read it with your beautiful eyes, and tell me if the truth is written on it.

*May.* Dear Bertha, yes!

*Ber.* (*Putting her arms around MAY, and drawing her nearer.*) There is not, in my soul, a wish or thought that is not for your good, bright May! There is not, in my soul, a grateful recollection stronger than the deep remembrance which is stored there, of the many, many times when, in the full pride of sight and beauty, you have had consideration for Blind Bertha, even when we two were children, or when Bertha was



as much a child as ever blindness can be. Every blessing on your head! Light upon your happy course! (*Holds her closer.*) Not the less, my dear May, — not the less, my bird, because, to-day, the knowledge that you are to be *his* wife has wrung my heart almost to breaking! Father — May — Mary! O, forgive me that it is so, for the sake of all he has done to relieve the weariness of my dark life; and for the sake of the belief you have in me, when I call Heaven to witness that I could not wish him married to a wife more worthy of his goodness!

[*She sinks slowly on her knees, and hides her face in MAY's dress.*]

*Caleb.* (R.) Great Power! Have I deceived her from her cradle, but to break her heart at last!

*Dot.* (*Coming down quickly.*) Come, come, dear Bertha! come away with me! Give her your arm, May. So! How composed she is, you see, already; and how good it is of her to mind us! (*Kisses her.*) Come away, dear Bertha. Come! And here's her good father will come with her — won't you, Caleb? To — be — sure!

[*Exeunt CALEB, BERTHA, and DOT, L.*  
MRS. FIELDING remains at table. Re-  
enter DOT.

*Dot.* (*Drawing chair to fire, R.*) So bring me the precious baby, Tilly; and while I have it in my lap, here's Mrs. Fielding, Tilly, will tell me all about the management of babies, and put me right in twenty points where I'm as wrong as can be. Won't you, Mrs. Fielding?

[*Curtain*

## THE CRISIS.

SCENE : the same. *Time, evening.* CALEB *at work at his bench*, R. BERTHA *seated near him*. DOT and MRS. FIELDING *conversing together at fire*. TACELETON and MAY, L. *At back*, L., TILLY *with baby*. *Barking of a dog is heard, followed by a heavy step. Door, c., opens.*

Bertha. (*Starting and listening.*) Whose step is that?

John. (*Entering.*) Whose step? Why, mine!

Ber. (*Rising.*) The other step. The man's tread behind you!

John. (*Laughing.*) She's not to be deceived. (*Turning and going to open door.*) Come along, sir. You'll be welcome! Never fear!

*Enter* STRANGER.

He's not so much a stranger, that you haven't seen him once, Caleb. You'll give him house-room till we go?

Caleb. O, surely, John, and take it as an honor.

John. He's the best company on earth, to talk secrets in. I have reasonable good lungs, but he tries 'em, I can tell you. (*Very loud to stranger.*) Sit down, sir. (*He sits, up the stage, R.*) All friends here, and glad to see you. (*To BERTHA.*) A chair in the chimney corner, and leave to sit quite silent and look pleasantly about him, is all he cares for. He's easily pleased. (*DOT crosses to c., and stands by JOHN.*)

*Bertha.* (*Softly.*) Father, who is it? Describe him to me.

[*CALEB describes STRANGER to her in a low tone. When he has finished BERTHA sighs and turns away.*

*John.* (*Embracing wife, c.*) A clumsy Dot she was this afternoon! And yet I like her, somehow. See yonder, Dot. (*Points to STRANGER. DOT turns her head towards STRANGER, and then looks down.* He's—ha, ha, ha!—he's full of admiration for you! Talked of nothing else, the whole way here. Why, he's a brave old boy! I like him for it!

*Dot.* (*Glancing uneasily about the room.*) I wish he'd had a better subject, John.

*John.* A better subject! There's no such thing. Come, off with the great-coat! (*DOT assists him.*) Off with the thick shawl, off with the heavy wrappers, and a cosy half hour by the fire! (*To MRS. FIELDING.*) My humble service, Mistress. A game at cribbage, you and I? That's hearty. The cards and board, Dot. (*She brings them.*) And a glass of beer here, if there's any left, small wife.

[*MRS. FIELDING and JOHN sit down and play, up the stage, R. DOT and the STRANGER go out quietly. TACKLETON follows them. MRS. FIELDING and JOHN play. . After a time, TACKLETON returns and touches JOHN on the arm.*

*Tac.* I'm sorry to disturb you, but a word with you directly.

*John.* I'm going to deal. It's a crisis.

*Tac.* It is. Come here, man!

*John.* (*Rising and speaking hurriedly.*) What's the matter? (*MRS. FIELDING remains seated, occupied with her cards.*)

*Tac.* Hush! John Peerybingle, I'm sorry for this. I am, indeed. I have been afraid of it. I have suspected it from the first.

*John.* (*Anxiously.*) What is it?

*Tac.* Hush! I'll show you, if you'll come with me. (*They go up the stage.*) A moment! Can you bear to look through that window, do you think?

*John.* Why not? (*Moves towards window.*)

*Tac.* (*Checking him.*) A moment more. Don't commit any violence. It's of no use. It's dangerous, too. You're a strong-made man; and you might do murder before you know it.

[*JOHN looks at him and recoils, then strides to the window, left of door, c. TACKLETON follows him. As he reaches it, the darkness without is illumined, and two figures, DOT and the STRANGER, are seen. The STRANGER has removed his wig, and revealed a young man. He has his arm about DOT, and is talking to her. As JOHN looks, DOT turns to STRANGER, and adjusts his wig, laughing. JOHN raises his clinched hand, opens it and covers TACKLETON'S eyes with it, then falls into a chair. The vision disappears. JOHN recovers himself, and slowly puts on his over-coat and shawl, and makes other preparations for departure.*

*Dot.* (*Entering.*) Now, John, dear! (*Exit JOHN.*)  
Good-night, May. Good-night, Bertha!

[*Kisses both; prepares to go. BERTHA  
seated, R. C., weeping.*

*Tilly.* (*Walking up and down past TACKLETON  
with baby in her arms.*) Did the knowledge that  
it was to be its wives, then, wring its hearts almost to  
breaking; and did its fathers deceive it from its cra-  
dles, but to break its hearts at last! (*TACKLETON  
scowls at her.*) Did it, then!

*Dot.* Now, Tilly, give me the baby! Good-night,  
Mr. Tackleton. Where's John, for goodness' sake?

*Tac.* (*At back, L.*) He's going to walk beside the  
horse's head.

*Dot.* What! John walk? To-night?

*Tac.* Yes!

[*Exeunt, all but CALEB and BERTHA.*

*Caleb.* (*Sitting near the fire with his head in his  
hands, and watching BERTHA. Sadly.*) Have I  
deceived her from her cradle, but to break her heart  
at last.

[*Curtain.*

## "REPARATION."

SCENE: JOHN PEERYBINGLE'S Kitchen, as in SCENE I.; *Time, early morning; JOHN seated, R., before the embers of last night's fire, his head buried in his hands.*

*John. (In a low tone.)* He lies there (*looking towards L.*) under my roof. One blow would beat in the door. "You might do murder before you know it," said Tackleton. How *could* it be murder, if you gave the villain time to grapple with you hand to hand! He is a younger man than you; yes, yes, a younger man; some lover who won the heart that *you* have never touched. Some lover of her early choice, of whom she has thought and dreamed, for whom she has pined and pined, when you fancied her so happy by your side. O, agony to think of it! (*DOT glides in, L. U. E. Her hair hangs down over her shoulders. She crosses, noiselessly, to JOHN, and falling at his feet, looks up into his face. He raises his head and looks at her; takes her head in his hands and kisses her forehead; then buries his face again in his hands. Exit DOT, sobbing.*) O! how desolate I have become! The great bond of my life is rent asunder! Rather would I have seen her lying dead there, before me, with her child upon her breast. O, what shall I do! (*Fiercely.*) Kill him! Kill him! In his bed!

[*Looks about him for a weapon; rises, and crossing the room takes down his gun;*

*goes to door of chamber, L., occupied by STRANGER; reverses the gun to beat in the door; as he holds it in the air, Cricket chirps loudly, and the fire flashes up. He recoils, lowers the gun, puts it aside, returns to his place by the fire, sits down, and bursts into tears. Music. The Cricket, in fairy shape, comes out and stands, L. C.\**

*Fairy.* (Slowly and softly.) I love it for the many times I have heard it, and the many thoughts its harmless music has given me.

*John.* (R.) She said so! True!

*Fairy.* This has been a happy home, John, and I love the Cricket for its sake!

*John.* It has been, Heaven knows! She made it happy, always, — until now. (Sobs.)

*Fairy.* So sweet-tempered; so domestic, joyful, busy, and light-hearted!

*John.* Otherwise I never could have loved her as I did.

*Fairy.* As you do!

*John.* (Hesitatingly.) As I did.

*Fairy.* Upon your own hearth —

*John.* The hearth she has blighted.

*Fairy.* The hearth she has — how often! — blessed and brightened; the hearth which, but for her, were only a few stones and bricks and rusty bars, but which

---

\* The appearance of the Fairy, though adding much to the effectiveness of the Scene, may be dispensed with, and the whole, as far as "Enter TACKLETON," made a soliloquy.

has been, through her, the altar of your home ; on which you have nightly sacrificed some petty passion, selfishness, or care, and offered up the homage of a tranquil mind, a trusting nature, and an overflowing heart. Upon your own hearth ; in its quiet sanctuary, surrounded by its gentle influences and associations, hear her ! Hear me ! Hear everything that speaks the language of your hearth and home !

*John.* And pleads for her !

*Fairy.* All things that speak the language of your hearth and home, *must* plead for her ! For they speak the truth.

[*A knock at door, c. Fairy vanishes, L. U. E.*

*Enter, C. D., TACKLETON, dressed for his wedding. He comes down to c.*

*Tac.* John Peerybingle ! My good fellow, how do you find yourself this morning ?

*John.* (*Shaking his head.*) I have had but a poor night, Master Tackleton, for I have been a good deal disturbed in my mind. But it's over now ! Can you spare me half an hour or so, for some private talk ?

*Tac.* I came on purpose.

*Enter, L. U. E., TILLY. She goes to door, L., and knocks ; looks in at the keyhole ; knocks again, very loud.*

*John.* (R.) You're not married before noon, I think ?

*Tac.* (c.) No. Plenty of time. Plenty of time.

[*TILLY knocks again and shakes the door.*

*Tilly.* (*Looking around.*) If you please, I can't



make nobody hear. I hope nobody ain't gone, and been and died, if you please! (*Kicks the door.*)

*Tac.* Shall I go? It's curious. (*JOHN nods assent. TACKLETON goes to the door, knocks, kicks, and at last opens it; looks in, goes in and comes out hurriedly. Goes to JOHN, and speaks in his ear. Exit TILLY, L. U. E.*) John Peerybingle, I hope there has been nothing—nothing rash in the night? (*JOHN turns quickly to him.*) Because he's gone! And the window's open. I don't see any marks—to be sure, it's almost on a level with the garden; but I was afraid there might have been some—some scuffle, eh?

*John.* Make yourself easy. He went into that room last night, without harm in word or deed from me, and no one has entered it since. He is away of his own free will. I'd go out gladly at that door, and beg my bread from house to house, for life, if I could so change the past that he had never come. But he has come and gone, and I have done with him. (*DOT enters softly, L. U. E., and stands at back.*)

*Tac.* (*Taking a chair, c.*) O!—Well, I think he has got off pretty easy.

*John.* (*Covering his face with his hand, and speaking slowly.*) You showed me, last night, my wife; my wife that I love; secretly—

*Tac.* And tenderly—

*John.* Conniving at that man's disguise, and giving him opportunities of meeting her alone. I think there's no sight I wouldn't have rather seen than that. I think there's no man in the world I wouldn't have rather had to show it me.

*Tac.* I confess to having had my suspicions always. And that has made me objectionable here, I know.

*John.* But as you did show it me, and as you saw her, my wife, my wife that I love, — as you saw her at this disadvantage, it is right and just that you should also see with my eyes, and look into my breast, and know what my mind is upon the subject. For it's settled. And nothing can shake it now.

*Tac.* To be sure, it is necessary to vindicate —

*John.* (*Interrupting him.*) I am a plain, rough man, with very little to recommend me. I am not a clever man, as you very well know. I am not a young man. I loved my little Dot, because I had seen her grow up, from a child, in her father's house; because I knew how precious she was; because she has been my life, for years and years. There's many a man I can't compare with, who never could have loved my little Dot like me, I think. (*Pause.*) I often thought that though I wasn't good enough for her, I should make her a kind husband, and perhaps know her value better than another; and in this way I reconciled it to myself, and came to think it might be possible that we should be married. And, in the end, it came about, and we *were* married!

*Tac.* Hah!

*John.* I had studied myself. I knew how much I loved her, and how happy I should be. But I had not — I feel it now — sufficiently considered *her*.

*Tac.* To be sure. Giddiness, frivolity, fickleness, love of admiration! not considered! All left out of sight! Hah!

*John.* (*Sternly.*) You had best not interrupt me, till you understand me; and you're wide of doing

so. If, yesterday, I'd have struck that man down at a blow, who dared to breathe a word against her, to-day I'd set my foot upon his face, if he was my brother! (*TACKLETON looks astonished. JOHN continues more calmly.*) Did I consider that I took her — at her age and with her beauty — from her young companions, and the many scenes of which she was the ornament; in which she was the brightest star that ever shone; to shut her up from day to day in my dull house to keep my tedious company? Did I consider that it was no merit in me that I loved her, when everybody must, who knew her? Never! I took advantage of her hopeful nature, and her cheerful disposition, and I married her. I wish I never had! For her sake, not for mine! Heaven bless her for the cheerful constancy with which she has tried to keep the knowledge of this from me! And Heaven help me that, in my slow mind, I have not found it out before! Poor child! Poor Dot! That I could ever hope she would be fond of me! That I could ever believe she was!

*Tac.* She made such a show of it that, to tell you the truth, it was the origin of my misgivings.

*John.* She has tried — I only now begin to know how hard — to be my dutiful and zealous wife. How good she has been; how much she has done; how brave and strong a heart she has, let the happiness I have known under this roof bear witness! It will be some help and comfort to me, when I am here alone.

*Tac.* Here alone? O! Then you *do* mean to take some notice of this?

*John.* I mean to do her the greatest kindness, and

make her the best reparation, in my power. I can release her from the daily pain of an unequal marriage, and the struggle to conceal it. She shall be as free as I can render her.

*Tac.* Make *her* reparation! There must be something wrong here. You didn't say that, of course.

*John.* (*Seizing TACKLETON by the collar and shaking him.*) Listen to me! And take care that you hear me right. Listen to me. Do I speak plainly? (*JOHN and TACKLETON, centre, both standing.*)

*Tac.* Very plainly, indeed.

*John.* As if I meant it?

*Tac.* Very much as if you meant it.

*John.* I sat upon that hearth last night, all night; on the spot where she has often sat beside me, with her sweet face looking into mine. I called up her whole life, day by day. I had her dear self, in its every passage, in review before me. And upon my soul she is innocent, if there is One to judge the innocent and the guilty! Passion and distrust have left me, and nothing but my grief remains. In an unhappy moment, some old lover, better suited to her tastes and years than I, returned. In an unhappy moment, taken by surprise, she made herself a party to his treachery, by concealing it. Last night she saw him, in the interview we witnessed. It was wrong. But otherwise than this, she is innocent if there is truth on earth!

*Tac.* If that is your opinion —

*John.* So, let her go! Go, with my blessing for the many happy hours she has given me, and my forgiveness for any pang she has caused me. Let her go, and have the peace of mind I wish her! She'll never

nate me. She'll learn to like me better when I'm not a drag upon her. This is the day on which I took her from her home. To-day she shall return to it, and I will trouble her no more. Her father and mother will be here to-day, — we had made a little plan for keeping it together, — and they shall take her home. I can trust her there, or anywhere. She leaves me without blame, and she will live so, I am sure. If I should die, — I may, perhaps, while she is still young; I have lost some courage in a few hours, — she'll find that I remembered her, and loved her to the last. This is the end of what you showed me. Now it's over!

*Dot.* (*Clasping her hands, without coming forward.*) O, no, John, not over! Do not say it's over yet! Not quite yet. I have heard your noble words. I could not steal away, pretending to be ignorant of what has affected me with such deep gratitude. Do not say it's over, till the clock has struck again!

*John.* No hand can make the clock which will strike again for me the hours that are gone. But let it be so, if you will, my dear. It will strike soon. I'd try to please you in a harder case than that.

*Tac.* Well! I must be off, for when the clock strikes again, it'll be necessary for me to be upon my way to church. Good morning, John Peerybingle. (*Dot sits, weeping, at back, R. TILLY brings in baby, L. U. E., and walks up and down with it.*) I'm sorry to be deprived of the pleasure of your company. Sorry for the loss, and the occasion of it too!

*John.* (*Accompanying him to door, c.*) I have spoken plainly?

*Tac.* O, quite!

*John.* And you'll remember what I have said?

*Tac.* (*Stepping out.*) Why, if you compel me to make the observation, I must say that it was so very unexpected, that I am far from being likely to forget it.

*John.* The better for us both. Good-by! I give you joy!

*Tac.* I wish I could give it to *you*. As I can't, thank'ee. Between ourselves, I don't much think I shall have the less joy in my married life, because May hasn't been too officious about me, and too demonstrative. Good-by! Take care of yourself.

[*Exit TACKLETON.* JOHN stands at open door, c., looking after him. DOT, R., continues to sob hysterically. TILLY walks up and down the stage, L., "hushing" the baby.

*Tilly.* (*Stopping at L.*) Ow if you please don't! It's enough to dead and bury the baby so it is if you please.

*Dot.* (*Drying her eyes.*) Will you bring him, sometimes, to see his father, Tilly, when I can't live here, and have gone to my old home?

*Tilly.* (*Throwing back her head and bursting into a howl.*) Ow if you please don't! Ow if you please don't! Ow, what has everybody gone and been and done with everybody, making everybody else so wretched? Ow-w-w-w!

[DOT, R. seated; TILLY, L., with baby;  
JOHN, C. D., looking out of the door.  
*Curtain.\**

---

\* The Scene may close here, or may continue with the entrance of CALEB and BERTHA. In the latter case, JOHN will go off, C. D., immediately after TACKLETON.

## "SIGHT RESTORED." \*

SCENE, the same; DOT *seated, R., sobbing hysterically.* TILLY, L., *with baby in her arms, looking at DOT.*

*Tilly.* Ow if you please don't! It's enough to dead and bury the baby so it is if you please!

*Dot.* (*Drying her eyes.*) Will you bring him sometimes, to see his father, Tilly, when I can't live here, and have gone to my old home?

*Tilly.* (*Bursting into a howl.*) Ow if you please don't! Ow if you please don't! Ow, what has everybody been and gone and done with everybody, making everybody else so wretched? Ow-w-w-w!

*Enter CALEB, leading BERTHA. TILLY breaks off her "howl," and stares at them.*

*Bertha.* (L.) Mary, not at the marriage?

*Caleb.* (R. *Near DOT; whispering.*) I told her you wouldn't be there, mum. I heard as much last night. But, bless you, (*Takes her hands in his,*) I don't care for what they say. I don't believe them. There ain't much of me, but that little should be torn to pieces, sooner than I'd trust a word against you!

---

\* If this Scene is to follow the last without an intermission, it should commence at "Enter CALEB," and John should go off (in the last Scene) immediately after TACKLETON; otherwise, the last Scene should end at "Exit TACKLETON," and this one begin with TILLY, as above.



(*Embraces her.*) Bertha couldn't stay at home this morning. She was afraid, I know, to hear the bells ring, and couldn't trust herself to be so near them on their wedding day. So we started in good time, and came here. (*A pause.*) I have been thinking of what I have done. I have been blaming myself, till I hardly know what to do, or where to turn, for the distress of mind I have caused her. And I've come to the conclusion that I'd better, if you'll stay with me, mum, the while, tell her the truth. You'll stay with me the while? I — (*Tremblingly.*) I don't know what effect it may have upon her. I don't know what she'll think of me. I don't know that she'll ever care for her poor father afterwards. But it's best for her that she should be undeceived, and I must bear the consequences, as I deserve!

*Ber.* (*Crossing to R.*) Mary, where is your hand? Ah! Here it is; here it is! (*Kisses it and draws it through her arm.*) I heard them speaking softly among themselves last night, of some blame against you. They were wrong. (*CALEB crosses to L.*)

*Caleb.* They were wrong.

*Ber.* I knew it. I told them so. I scorned to hear a word! Blame her with justice! No! I am not so blind as that. I know you all better than you think. But none so well as her. Not even you, father. There is nothing half so real and so true about me, as she is. If I could be restored to sight this instant, and not a word were spoken, I could choose her from a crowd! My sister!

*Caleb.* Come here, Bertha, my dear! I have something on my mind I want to tell you, while we three



are alone. Hear me kindly! I have a confession to make to you, my darling.

*Ber.* (*Going to him.*) A confession, father?

*Caleb.* (L. C.) I have wandered from the truth and lost myself, my child. I have wandered from the truth, intending to be kind to you; and have been cruel.

*Ber.* Cruel!

*Dot.* (R.) He accuses himself too strongly, Bertha. You'll say so, presently. You'll be the first to tell him so.

*Ber.* He cruel to me?

*Caleb.* Not meaning it, my child. But I have been, though I never suspected it till yesterday. My dear blind daughter, hear me and forgive me. The world you live in, heart of mine, doesn't exist as I have represented it. The eyes you have trusted in have been false to you. (*BERTHA draws away from him.*) Your road in life was rough, my poor one, and I meant to smooth it for you. I have altered objects, changed the characters of people, invented many things that never have been, to make you happier. I have had concealments from you; put deceptions on you, God forgive me! and surrounded you with fancies.

*Ber.* (*Hurriedly, and drawing farther from him.*) But living people are not fancies! You can't change them.

*Caleb.* I have done so, Bertha. There is one person that you know, my dove —

*Ber.* (*Reproachfully.*) O, father! Why do you say I know? What and whom do I know! I, who have no leader! I, so miserably blind! (*Covers her face with her hands.*)

*Caleb.* The marriage that takes place to-day, is with a stern, sordid, grinding man. A hard master to you and me, my dear, for many years. Ugly in his looks, and in his nature. Cold and callous, always. Unlike what I have painted him to you in everything, my child. In everything.

*Ber.* O, why — why did you ever do this! Why did you ever fill my heart so full, and then come in like Death, and tear away the objects of my love! O Heaven, how blind I am! How helpless and alone! (*Sinks on the floor, c., and weeps.* *CALEB hangs his head in silence; Cricket chirps softly; BERTHA raises her head.*) Mary, tell me what my home is, — what it truly is.

*Dot.* It is a poor place, Bertha; very poor and bare, indeed. The house will scarcely keep out wind and rain another winter. (*BERTHA rises and goes to DOT.*) It is as roughly shielded from the weather, Bertha, as your poor father in his sackcloth coat. (*CALEB sits, l., with his arm on the back of the chair, and his head on his arm.*)

*Ber.* (*Leading DOT up the stage.*) Those presents that I took such care of, — that came almost at my wish, and were so dearly welcome to me, — where did they come from? Did you send them? (*DOT and BERTHA stand at back, c.*)

*Dot.* No.

*Ber.* Who then? (*DOT is silent. BERTHA hides her face on DOT's shoulder.*) Dear Mary, a moment — one moment. Move this way. Speak softly to me. You are true, I know. You'd not deceive me now — would you?

*Dot.* (*Embracing her.*) No, Bertha, indeed!

*Ber.* No, I'm sure you would not. You have too much pity for me. Mary, look across the room to where we were just now, — to where my father is, — my father, so compassionate and loving to me — and tell me what you see.

*Dot.* I see an old man sitting in a chair, and leaning sorrowfully on the back, with his face resting on his hand; as if his child should comfort him, Bertha.

*Ber.* Yes, yes. She will. Go on.

*Dot.* He is an old man, worn with care and work. He is a spare, dejected, thoughtful, gray-haired man. I see him now, despondent and bowed down, and striving against nothing. But, Bertha, I have seen him many times before, and striving hard in many ways for one great, sacred object. And I honor his gray head, and bless him.

*Ber.* (*Breaking away, and throwing herself on her knees before CALEB, L.*) It is my sight restored. It is my sight! I have been blind, and now my eyes are open. I never knew him. To think I might have died, and never truly seen the father who has been so loving to me! (*CALEB much moved.*) There is not a gallant figure on this earth that I would love so dearly, and would cherish so devotedly as this! The grayer, and more worn, the dearer, father! Never let them say I am blind again. There's not a furrow in his face, there's not a hair upon his head, that shall be forgotten in my prayers and thanks to Heaven! (*Throws her arms about him.*)

*Caleb.* (*Embracing her.*) My Bertha!

*Ber.* (*Caressing him, and weeping.*) And in my blindness, I believed him to be so different! And having him beside me, day by day, so mindful of me always, never dreamed of this!

*Caleb.* The fresh, smart father in the blue coat, Bertha — he's gone!

*Ber.* Nothing is gone. Dearest father, no. Everything is here — in you. The father that I loved so well; the father that I never loved enough, and never knew; the benefactor whom I first began to reverence and love, because he had such sympathy for me; all are here in you. Nothing is dead to me. The soul of all that was most dear to me is here — here, with the worn face, and the gray head. And I am *not* blind, father, any longer!

[*Tableau.* CALEB and BERTHA, L. C., DOT,  
R. C.; *Curtain.*

“MY BOY FROM THE GOLDEN SOUTH AMERICAS.”

SCENE, the same; CALEB, *seated by* BERTHA, L. C

DOT, *seated*, R. C.

*Bertha.* (*Hesitating.*) Father — Mary!

*Caleb.* Yes, my dear. Here she is.

*Ber.* There is no change in *her*? You never told me anything of *her* that was not true?

*Caleb.* I should have done it, my dear, I am afraid, if I could have made her better than she was. But I must have changed her for the worse, if I had changed her at all. Nothing could improve her, Bertha. (*BERTHA embraces DOT.*)

*Dot.* More changes than you think for, may happen, though, my dear. Changes for the better, I mean. Changes for great joy to some of us. You mustn't let them startle you too much if any such should ever happen, and affect you! Are those wheels upon the road? You've a quick ear, Bertha. Are they wheels? (*Rises, and clings tremblingly to back of her chair, looking up the stage.*)

*Ber.* Yes, coming very fast.

*Dot.* (*Panting with excitement.*) I — I — I know you have a quick ear, because I have noticed it often, and because you were so quick to find out that strange step last night. They are wheels, indeed! Coming nearer! Nearer! (*Excitedly.*) Very close! and now you hear them stopping at the garden gate! And now you hear a step outside the door — the same step, Bertha — is it not? — and now — (*Gives a loud cry,*

*and running to CALEB, L. C., covers his eyes with her hand. A young man (EDWARD) rushes in, C. D., and, throwing his hat in the air, comes down towards them.)* Is it over?

*Edward.* (R. C.) Yes!

*Dot.* Happily over?

*Edw.* Yes.

*Dot.* Do you recollect the voice, dear Caleb? Did you ever hear the like of it before?

*Caleb.* (*Trembling.*) If my boy in the Golden South Americas, was alive —

*Dot.* (*Removing her hands, and clapping them.*) He *is* alive! Look at him! See where he stands before you, healthy and strong! Your own dear son! Your own dear, living, loving brother, Bertha! (*They embrace one another.*)

*Clock strikes twelve. Enter JOHN, C. D. He starts back.*

*Caleb.* Look, John! Look here! My own boy, from the Golden South Americas! My own son! Him that you fitted out, and sent away yourself. Him that you were always such a friend to.

*John.* (*Advancing towards him, with extended hands, C., then recoiling.*) Edward! Was it you?

*Dot.* (L.) Now tell him all! Tell him all, Edward; and don't spare me, for nothing shall make me spare myself in his eyes, ever again.

*Edw.* (L. C.) I was the man.

*John.* (R. C.) And could you steal, disguised, into the house of your old friend? There was a frank boy once — how many years is it, Caleb, since we heard

that he was dead, and had it proved, we thought—who never would have done that.

*Edw.* There was a generous friend of mine once; more a father to me than a friend, who never would have judged me, or any other man, unheard. You were he. So I am certain you will hear me now.

*John.* (R.) Well, that's but fair. I will.

*Edw.* You must know that when I left here, a boy, I was in love, and my love was returned. She was a very young girl, who, perhaps (you may tell me), did not know her own mind. But I knew mine, and I had a passion for her.

*John.* You had! You!

*Edw.* Indeed I had. And she returned it. I have ever since believed she did, and now I am sure she did.

*John.* Heaven help me! This is worse than all.

*Edw.* Constant to her, and returning, full of hope, after many hardships and perils, to redeem my part of our old contract, I heard, twenty miles away, that she was false to me; that she had forgotten me, and had bestowed herself upon another, and a richer man. I had no mind to reproach her, but I wished to see her, and to prove beyond dispute that this was true. That I might have the truth, the real truth, observing freely for myself, I dressed myself unlike myself,—you know how,—and waited on the road—you know where. You had no suspicion of me; neither had—had she (*Points to Dot*), until I whispered in her ear at that fireside, and she so nearly betrayed me.

*Dot.* (L.) (*Sobbing.*) But when she knew that Edward was alive, and had come back, and when she knew his purpose, she advised him, by all means, to

keep his secret close ; for his old friend, John Peery bingle, was much too open in his nature, and too clumsy in all artifice — being a clumsy man in general. — to keep it for him. And when she, — that's me, John, — told him all, and how his sweetheart had believed him to be dead ; and how she had been at last over-persuaded by her mother into a marriage which the silly, dear old thing called advantageous ; and when she — that's me, again, John, — told him they were not yet married, and that it would be nothing but a sacrifice if it went on, for there was no love on her side ; and when he went nearly mad with joy to hear it, then she — that's me again — said she could go between them, and would sound his sweetheart and be sure that what she — me again, John, — said and thought was right. And it *was* right, John ! And they were brought together, John. And they were married, John, an hour ago ! And

*Enter, C. D., MAY FIELDING, with her mother ; they stand at back, C.*

here's the bride ! And Gruff and Tackleton may die a bachelor ! And I'm a happy little woman, May, God bless you. (*Runs to MAY, C., up the stage, and embraces her ! JOHN is rushing towards her, but she stops him and retreats to L.*) No, John, no ! Hear all ! It was wrong to have a secret from you. I'm very sorry. I didn't think it any harm. But when I knew 'hat you had seen me walking in the gallery with Edward, and when I knew what you thought, I felt how giddy and how wrong it was. But, oh, dear John, how could you, could you think so ! Not yet, John,



not yet! When I was sad about this intended marriage, it was because I remembered May and Edward such young lovers; and knew that her heart was far away from Tackleton. You believe that now, don't you, John? No; keep there, please, John! When I laugh at you, John, as I sometimes do, and call you clumsy, and a dear old goose, and names of that sort, it's because I love you, John, so well, and take such pleasure in your ways, and wouldn't see you altered in the least respect to have you made a king to-morrow.

*Caleb.* Hooroar! My opinion!

*Dot.* Not yet, John; another minute or two, if you please, John. What I want most to tell you, I have kept to the last. My dear, good, generous John, when we were talking the other night about the Cricket, I had it on my lips to say that, at first, I did not love you quite as dearly as I do now; but, dear John, every day and every hour, I loved you more and more. And if I could have loved you better than I do, the noble words I heard you say this morning would have made me. (*JOHN advances slowly across the stage.*) But I can't. All the affection that I had (it was a great deal, John), I gave you long, long ago, and I have no more left to give. Now, my dear husband, take me to your heart again! That's my home, John; and never, never think of sending me to any other!

[*Throws herself into his arms, c. All join in congratulations. Cricket chirps. Noise without.\**]

---

\* JOHN and DOT, C.; EDWARD and MAY, L. C.; MRS. FIELDING and BERTHA, R. C.; CALEB up the stage, L. U. E. TILLY up the stage, R.

*Caleb.* (*Looking out of window, left of C. D.*)  
Gruff and Tackleton coming back.

*Enter TACKLETON, C. D. ; stops, C.*

*Tac.* Why, what's this, John Peerybingle ! There's some mistake. I appointed Mrs. Tackleton to meet me at the church, and I'll swear I passed her on the road, on her way here. O ! here she is ! I beg your pardon, sir ; I haven't the pleasure of knowing you ; but if you can do me the favor to spare this young lady, she has rather a particular engagement this morning.

*Edw.* But I *can't* spare her. I couldn't think of it.

*Tac.* What do you mean, you vagabond ?

*Edw.* I mean that I am as deaf to harsh discourse this morning, as I was to all discourse last night. (*TACKLETON looks at him and starts. EDWARD holds out MAY'S left hand.*) I am sorry, sir, that the young lady can't accompany you to church ; but as she has been there once, this morning, perhaps you'll excuse her.

[*TACKLETON looks at her, and takes from his pocket a piece of silver paper, containing a ring, which he gives to TILLY.*

*Tac.* Miss Slowboy, will you have the kindness to throw that in the fire ? Thank'ee.

*Edw.* It was a previous engagement, quite an old engagement, that prevented my wife from keeping her appointment with you, I assure you.

*Tac.* O, certainly ! O, to be sure ! It's all right, it's quite correct. Mrs. Edward Plummer, I infer ?

*Edw.* That's the name.

*Tac.* Ah! (*Looking closely at him.*) I shouldn't have known you, sir. I give you joy, sir.

*Edw.* Thank'ee.

*Tac.* Mrs. Peerybingle, I'm sorry. You haven't done me a very great kindness, but, upon my life, I am sorry. You understand me; that's enough. It's quite correct, ladies and gentlemen all, and perfectly satisfactory. Good morning! [*Exit, c. d.*]

[The Scene may end here, or may be continued by the addition of the following: ]

[*The party make preparations for a grand dinner together, setting the table in centre of stage. During the preparations a tap at door, c. d., is heard. JOHN opens door; enter, man, with box on his head; he places box on table.*]

*Man.* Mr. Tackleton's compliments, and as he hasn't got no use for the cake himself, p'r'aps you'll eat it. [*Exit.*]

*Mrs. Fielding.* I wouldn't touch it. It *must* be poisoned. I remember having heard of a cake that turned a whole seminary of young ladies blue.

*May.* O, no, mother! No fear of that. (*She cuts the cake, and offers it to the company.*)

*Another tap. Enter same man, with a large bundle.*

*Man.* Mr. Tackleton's compliments, and he's sent a few toys for the Babby. They ain't ugly. (*Exit. Tap again.*)

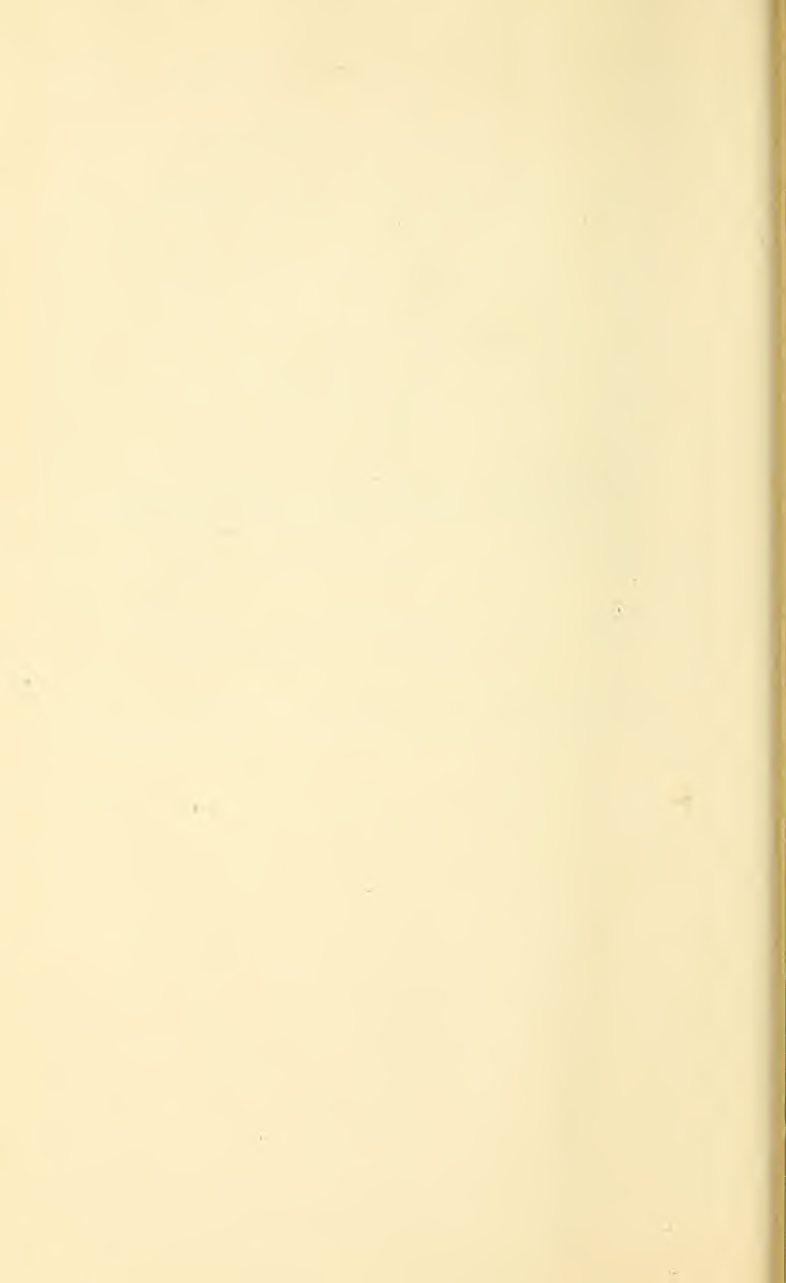
*Enter TACKLETON, C. D.*

*Tac.* (*Taking off his hat.*) Mrs. Peerybingle! I'm sorry. I'm more sorry than I was this morning. I have had time to think of it. John Peerybingle! I am sour by disposition; but I can't help being sweetened, more or less, by coming face to face with such a man as you. Caleb! this unconscious little nurse gave me a broken hint last night, of which I have found the thread. I blush to think how easily I might have bound you and your daughter to me, and what a miserable idiot I was, when I took her for one. Friends, one and all, my house is very lonely to-night. I have not so much as a Cricket on my hearth. I have scared them all away. Be gracious to me; let me join this happy party!

[*Applause. Congratulations. Tableau. Cricket chirps merrily. Curtain.*

[This Scene may be still further extended by introducing the dancing and merry-making described in the original.]

THE BATTLE OF LIFE.



## THE BATTLE OF LIFE.

[*For a description of characters and costumes, see Index, at the end of this volume.*]

---

### “ALL A FARCE.”

SCENE, DR. JEDDLER'S Orchard. *Across the back, a fence, with a gate, c. ; R., Porch of DR. JEDDLER'S house. L., Trees, &c. ; Music, a harp and fiddle. GRACE and MARION dancing to the music. Enter, R., DR. JEDDLER. GRACE and MARION stand at gate, c.*

*Dr. Jeddler.* (*Going towards c.*) Music and dancing to-day! (*Stopping and talking to himself.*) I thought they dreaded to-day; but it's a world of contradictions. Why, Grace! why, Marion! Is the world more mad than usual this morning?

*Marion.* (*Going to him and looking in his face.*) Make some allowance for it, father, if it be, for it's somebody's birthday.

*Dr. J.* Somebody's birthday, Puss? Don't you know it's always somebody's birthday? Did you never hear how many new performers enter on this—ha, ha, ha!—it's impossible to speak gravely of it—

on this preposterous and ridiculous business called Life, every minute.

*Marion.* No, father!

*Dr. F.* No, not you, of course, — you're a woman, — almost. By-the-by, I suppose it's *your* birthday?

*Mar.* No! Do you really, father?

*Dr. F.* (*Kissing her.*) There! Take my love with it. And many happy returns of the — the idea! — of the day. (*Aside.*) The notion of wishing happy returns in such a farce as this, is good — Ha, ha, ha! Well, but how did you get the music? Poultry stealers, of course! Where did the minstrels come from?

*Grace.* (*Arranging the flowers in MARION'S hair.*) Alfred sent the music.

*Dr. F.* O, Alfred sent the music — did he?

*Grace.* Yes. He met it coming out of the town as he was entering, early. The men are travelling on foot, and rested there last night; and as it was Marion's birthday, and he thought it would please her, he sent them on, with a pencilled note to me, saying that if I thought so too, they had come to serenade her.

*Dr. F.* Ay. ay, he always takes your opinion.

*Grace.* And my opinion being favorable, and Marion being in high spirits, and beginning to dance. I joined her. And so we danced to Alfred's music till we were out of breath. And we thought the music all the gayer for being sent by Alfred — didn't we, Marion?

*Mar.* O, I don't know, Grace. How you tease me about Alfred!

*Grace.* Tease you by mentioning your lover?

*Mar.* I'm sure I don't much care to have him men-



tioned. (*Stripping some flowers and scattering the petals.*) I'm almost tired of hearing of him. And as to his being my lover —

*Grace.* Hush! Don't speak lightly of a true heart, which is all your own, Marion, even in jest. There's not a truer heart than Alfred's in the world!

*Mar.* No, perhaps not. But I don't know that there's great merit in that. I — I don't want him to be so very true. I never asked him. If he expects that I — But, dear Grace, why need we talk of him at all, just now?

*Dr. F.* Britain! Britain! Halloa!

*Britain.* (*Coming from the house, R.*) Now, then!

*Dr. F.* Where's the breakfast table?

*Brit.* In the house.

*Dr. F.* Are you going to spread it out here, as you were told last night? Don't you know that there are gentlemen coming? That this is a very particular occasion?

*Brit.* (*R.*) (*Very loud.*) I couldn't do anything, Doctor Jeddler, till the women had done getting in the apples — could I?

*Dr. F.* (*Looking at his watch.*) Well, have they done now? (*Exit BRITAIN, and returns with table.*) Come! (*clapping his hands*) come! Where's Clemency?

*Newcome.* (*Coming from trees, L.*) Here am I, Mister. It's all done, now. (*Speaking off, L.*) Clear away, gals! Everything shall be ready for you in half a minute, Mister! (*BRITAIN brings out table-furniture. NEWCOME lays the table at L., near trees.*) Here are them two lawyers a-coming, Mister.

*Dr. F.* (*Going towards gate, c.* MESSRS. SNITCHEY and CRAGGS enter at gate.) A-ha! Good morning! Good morning! Grace, my dear! Marion! Here are Messrs. Snitchey and Craggs. Where's Alfred?

*Grace.* (R.) He'll be back directly, father, no doubt. He had so much to do this morning, in his preparations for departure, that he was up and out by daybreak. Good morning, gentlemen!

*Mr. Snitchey.* (*Saluting.*) Ladies, for Self and Craggs, (CRAGGS bows,) good morning! Miss, (*To MARION, R.,*) I kiss your hand. (*Kisses it.*) And I wish you a hundred happy returns of this auspicious day.

*Dr. F.* (*Thoughtfully.*) Ha, ha, ha! The great farce, in a hundred acts!

*Mr. S.* You wouldn't, I am sure, cut the great farce short for this actress, at all events, Dr. Jeddler.

*Dr. F.* No, God forbid! May she live to laugh at it, as long as she *can* laugh, and then say, with the French wit, "The farce is ended; draw the curtain!"

*Mr. S.* (*Looking into his blue bag.*) The French wit was wrong, Dr. Jeddler, and your philosophy is altogether wrong—depend upon it, as I've often told you. Nothing serious in life! What do you call law?

*Dr. F.* A joke.

*Mr. S.* (*Looking up.*) Did you ever go to law?

*Dr. F.* Never!

*Mr. S.* If you ever do, perhaps you'll alter that opinion.

[*Puts his bag on the floor, against the leg of the table.*]

*Craggs.* It's made a great deal too easy.

*Dr. F.* Law is?

*Craggs.* Yes, everything is. Everything appears to me to be made too easy, now-a-days. It's the vice of these times. If the world is a joke (I am not prepared to say it isn't), it ought to be made a very difficult joke to crack. It ought to be as hard a struggle, sir, as possible. That's the intention. But, it's being made far too easy. We are oiling the gates of life. They ought to be rusty. We shall have them beginning to turn, soon, with a smooth sound. Whereas they ought to grate upon their hinges, sir.

*Enter, c., ALFRED, followed by a porter, with bundles. DR. JEDDLER, SNITCHEY, and CRAGGS advance to meet him.*

*Dr. F.* Happy returns, Alf!

*Mr. S.* (*Bowing low.*) A hundred happy returns of this auspicious day, Mr. Heathfield!

*Craggs.* (*In a low tone.*) Returns!

*Alfred.* Why, what a battery! and one — two — three — all foreboders of no good, in the great sea before me. I am glad you are not the first I have met this morning; I should have taken it for a bad omen. But Grace was the first — sweet, pleasant Grace — so I defy you all!

*New.* (*L.*) If you please, Mister, *I* was the first you know. She was walking out here, before sunrise, you remember. I was in the house.

*Alf.* That's true! Clemency was the first. So I defy you with Clemency.

*Mr. S.* Ha, ha, ha! — for Self and Craggs. What a defiance!

*Alf.* (*Shaking hands with all.*) Not so bad a one as it appears, may be. (*Looks around.*) Where are the — (*Sees GRACE and MARION at R.*) Oh! (*Crosses to them and salutes them.*)

*Dr. F.* Come, come, friends! To breakfast!

[*They sit at table, L. C., GRACE at head; next ALFRED and MARION; opposite them SNITCHEY and CRAGGS; at foot, DR. JEDDLER; at back, L., at a small table, BRITAIN carves beef and ham. NEWCOME waits on table.*]

*Brit.* (*Approaching Mr. S. with knife and fork in his hands.*) Meat?

*Mr. S.* Certainly.

*Brit.* (*To CRAGGS.*) Do you want any?

*Craggs.* Lean and well done.

[*BRITAIN serves both, and stationing himself behind, eyes them severely.*]

*Dr. F.* Now, Alfred, for a word or two of business while we are yet at breakfast.

*Mr. S. and C.* While we are yet at breakfast.

*Alf.* If you please, sir.

*Dr. F.* If anything could be serious, in such a —

*Alf.* Farce as this, sir.

*Dr. F.* In such a farce as this, it might be this recurrence, on the eve of separation, of a double birthday, which is connected with many associations pleasant to us four, and with the recollection of a long and amicable intercourse. That's not to the purpose.

*Alf.* Ah! yes, yes, Dr. Jeddler. It is to the pur-

pose. Much to the purpose, as my heart bears witness this morning; and as yours does too, I know, if you would let it speak. I leave your house to-day; I cease to be your ward to-day; we part with tender relations stretching far behind us, that never can be exactly renewed, and with others dawning yet before us (*he looks down at MARION*), fraught with such considerations as I must not trust myself to speak of now. Come, come! there's a serious grain in this large foolish dust-heap, Doctor. Let us allow to-day, that there is one. (MR. CRAGGS *chokes*.)

*Brit.* (*Grimly*.) I thought he was gone!

*Dr. F.* To-day! Hear him! Ha, ha, ha! Of all days in the foolish year. Why, on this day, the great battle was fought on this ground. On this ground where we now sit, where I saw my two girls dance this morning, where the fruit has just been gathered for our eating from these trees, the roots of which are struck in Men, not earth,—so many lives were lost, that within my recollection, generations afterwards, a church-yard full of bones, and dust of bones, and chips of cloven skulls, has been dug up from underneath our feet here. Yet not a hundred people in that battle knew for what they fought, or why; not a hundred of the inconsiderate rejoicers in the victory, why they rejoiced. Not half a hundred people were the better for the gain or loss. Not half a dozen men agree to this hour on the cause or merits, and nobody, in short, ever knew anything distinct about it, but the mourners of the slain. Serious, too! (*Laughing*.) Such a system!

*Alf.* But all this seems to me to be very serious.

*Dr. F.* Serious! If you allowed such things to be serious, you must go mad, or die, or climb up to the top of a mountain, and turn hermit.

*Alf.* Besides — so long ago.

*Dr. F.* Long ago! Do you know what the world has been doing, ever since! Do you know what else it has been doing? *I don't!*

*Mr. S.* (*Stirring his tea.*) It has gone to law a little.

*Craggs.* Although the way out has been always made too easy.

*Mr. S.* And you'll excuse my saying, Doctor, having been already put a thousand times in possession of my opinion, in the course of our discussions, that, in its having gone to law, and in its legal system altogether, I do observe a serious side — now, really, a something tangible, and with a purpose and intention in it —

[*NEWCOME falls against the table.*]

*Dr. F.* Heyday! what's the matter there?

*New.* It's this evil-inclined blue bag, always tripping up somebody!

*Mr. S.* With a purpose and intention in it, I was saying, that commands respect. Life a farce, Doctor Jeddler? With law in it? (*Doctor laughs.*) Granted, if you please, that war is foolish. There we agree. For example: Here's a smiling country (*pointing it out with his fork*), once overrun by soldiers — trespassers every man of 'em, — and laid waste by fire and sword. He, he, he! The idea of any man exposing himself, voluntarily, to fire and sword! Stupid, wasteful, positively ridiculous; you laugh at your

fellow-creatures, you know, when you think of it! But take this smiling country as it stands. Think of the laws appertaining to real property; to the bequest and devise of real property; to the mortgage and redemption of real property; to leasehold, freehold, and copyhold estate; think of the complicated laws relating to title and proof of title, with all the contradictory precedents and numerous acts of Parliament connected with them; think of the infinite number of ingenious and interminable chancery suits, to which this pleasant prospect may give rise; and acknowledge, Dr. Jeddler, that there is a green spot in the scheme about us! I believe (*looking at his partner*), that I speak for Self and Craggs? (CRAGGS *nods*.) A little more beef, if you please, Britain. I don't stand up for life in general; it's full of folly; full of something worse. Professions of trust, and confidence, and unselfishness, and all that! Bah, bah, bah! We see what they're worth. But you mustn't laugh at life; you've got a game to play; a very serious game, indeed! Everybody's playing against you, you know, and you're playing against them. O! it's a very interesting thing. There are deep moves upon the board. You must only laugh, Dr. Jeddler, when you win—and then not much. He, he, he! And then not much. (*Winks at Doctor.*)

*Dr. J.* Well, Alfred! what do you say now?

*Alf.* I say, sir, that the greatest favor you could do me, and yourself too, I am inclined to think, would be to try sometimes to forget this battle-field, and others like it, in that broader battle-field of Life, on which the sun looks every day.



*Mr. S.* Really, I'm afraid that wouldn't soften his opinions, Mr. Alfred. The combatants are very eager and very bitter in that same battle of Life. There's a great deal of cutting and slashing, and firing into people's heads from behind. There is terrible treading down, and trampling on. It is rather a bad business.

*Alf.* I believe, Mr. Snitchey, there are quiet victories and struggles, great sacrifices of self, and noble acts of heroism, in it — even in many of its apparent lightnesses and contradictions — not the less difficult to achieve, because they have no earthly chronicle or audience — done every day in nooks and corners, and in little households, and in men's and women's hearts — any one of which might reconcile the sternest man to such a world, and fill him with belief and hope in it, though two fourths of its people were at war, and another fourth at law; and that's a bold word. (*GRACE and MARION listen intently.*)

*Dr. J.* Well, well! I'm too old to be converted, even by my friend Snitchey, here, or my good spinster sister, Martha Jeddler; who had what she calls her domestic trials, ages ago, and has led a sympathizing life with all sorts of people ever since; and who is so much of your opinion (only she's less reasonable and more obstinate, being a woman) that we can't agree, and seldom meet. I was born upon this battle-field. I began, as a boy, to have my thoughts directed to the real history of a battle-field. Sixty years have gone over my head, and I have never seen the Christian world, including Heaven knows how many loving mothers and good enough girls, like mine here, any-



thing but mad for a battle-field. The same contradictions prevail in everything. One must either laugh or cry at such stupendous inconsistencies; and I prefer to laugh. (BRITAIN *chuckles*.)

*New.* (*Nudging him with her elbow.*) What are you laughing at?

*Brit.* Not you!

*New.* Who, then?

*Brit.* Humanity! That's the joke!

*New.* (*Aside.*) What between master and them lawyers, he's getting more and more addle-headed every day. (*Nudging him again.*) Do you know where you are? Do you want to get warning?

*Brit.* (*Looking immovably before him.*) I don't know anything. I don't care for anything. I don't make out anything. I don't believe anything. And I don't want anything.

*Dr. F.* But this is not our business, Alfred. Ceasing to be my ward (as you have said) to-day, and leaving us full to the brim of such learning as the Grammar School down here was able to give you, and your studies in London could add to that, and such practical knowledge as a dull old country Doctor, like myself, could graft upon both; you are away, now, into the world. The first term of probation appointed by your poor father being over, away you go now, your own master, to fulfil his second desire. And long before your three years' tour among the foreign schools of medicine is finished, you'll have forgotten us. Lord, you'll forget us easily in six months!

*Alf.* (*Laughing.*) If I do — But you know better; why should I speak to you!

*Dr. F.* I don't know anything of the sort. What do you say, Marion? (*MARION plays with her cup, without replying.*) I haven't been, I hope, a very unjust steward in the execution of my trust; but I am to be, at any rate, formally discharged, and released, and what not, this morning; and here are our good friends, Snitchey and Craggs, with a bagful of papers, and accounts, and documents, for the transfer of the balance of the trust-fund to you (I wish it was a more difficult one to dispose of, Alfred, but you must get to be a great man, and make it so), and other drolleries of that sort, which are to be signed, sealed, and delivered.

*Mr. S.* (*Pushing back his cup and taking out his papers.*) And duly witnessed as by law required; and Self and Craggs having been co-trustees with you, Doctor, in so far as the funds was concerned, we shall want your two servants to attest the signatures — can you read, Mrs. Newcome?

*New.* (*Behind GRACE.*) I ain't married, Mister.

*Mr. S.* O, I beg your pardon. (*Aside.*) I should think not. (*Looking at NEWCOME.*) You can read?

*New.* A little.

*Mr. S.* The marriage service, night and morning, eh?

*New.* No. Too hard. I only reads a thimble.

*Mr. S.* Read a thimble! What are you talking about, young woman?

*New.* (*Nodding.*) And a nutmeg-grater.

*Mr. S.* (*Starting at her.*) Why, this is a lunatic! a subject for the Lord High Chancellor!

*Craggs.* If possessed of any property!

[NEWCOME plunges into her pocket, and drawing out, one after another, a handkerchief, a candle end, an apple, an orange, needle-case, &c., all of which she gives to BRITAIN to hold, fishes out her thimble.

Grace. (*Laughing.*) Clemency's thimble and nutmeg-grater have each an engraved motto. They form her pocket library, for she is not much given to books.

Mr. S. O, that's it, is it, Miss Grace? Yes, yes! Ha, ha, ha! (*Aside.*) I thought our friend was an idiot. She looks uncommonly like it. (*To NEWCOME.*) And what does the thimble say, Mrs. Newcome?

New. I ain't married, Mister.

Mr. S. Well, Newcome. Will that do? What does the thimble say, Newcome?

[NEWCOME holds up the thimble on her fore finger.

Mr. S. That's the thimble, is it, young woman? And what does the thimble say?

New. (*Reading slowly round it.*) It says, "For-get and for-give." (SNITCHEY and CRAGGS laugh heartily.)

Mr. S. So new!

Craggs. So easy!

Mr. S. Such a knowledge of human nature in it!

Craggs. So applicable to the affairs of life!

Mr. S. (*To NEWCOME.*) And the nutmeg-grater?

New. The grater says, "Do as you — wold — be — done by."

Mr. S. Do, or you'll be done brown, you mean.

*New.* (*Shaking her head.*) I don't understand! I ain't no lawyer.

*Mr. S.* I am afraid that if she was, Doctor, she'd find it to be the golden rule of half her clients. They are serious enough in that, — whimsical as your world is, — and lay the blame on us afterwards. We, in our profession, are little else than mirrors, after all, Mr. Alfred; but we are generally consulted by angry and quarrelsome people, who are not in their best looks, and it's rather hard to quarrel with us if we reflect unpleasant aspects. I think that I speak for Self and Craggs?

*Craggs.* Decidedly.

*Mr. S.* (*Returning to his papers.*) And so, if Mr. Britain will oblige us with a mouthful of ink, we'll sign, seal, and deliver as soon as possible, or the coach will be coming past before we know where we are.

[*BRITAIN does not move; NEWCOME gets the ink; nudges BRITAIN as she passes him. He rouses himself. Papers are brought out, signed by BRITAIN and NEWCOME, and put into the blue bag again.*

*Dr. F.* Britain! Run to the gate and watch for the coach. (*BRITAIN goes to gate.*) Time flies, Alfred.

*Alf.* Yes, sir, yes. Dear Grace, a moment! Marion — so young and beautiful, so winning, and so much admired, dear to my heart as nothing else in life is — remember! I leave Marion to you! (*MARION stands apart.*)

*Grace.* She has always been a sacred charge to

me, Alfred. She is doubly so, now. I will be faithful to my trust, believe me.

*Alf.* I do believe it, Grace. I know it well. Who could look upon your face, and hear your voice, and not know it! Ah, Grace! If I had your well-governed heart and tranquil mind, how bravely I would leave this place to-day!

*Grace.* (*Smiling.*) Would you?

*Alf.* And yet, Grace — Sister, seems the natural word.

*Grace.* (*Quickly.*) Use it! I am glad to hear it. Call me nothing else.

*Alf.* And yet, sister, then, Marion and I had better have your true and steadfast qualities serving us here, and making us both happier and better. I wouldn't carry them away, to sustain myself, if I could!

*Brit.* Coach upon the hill-top!

*Dr. F.* Time flies, Alfred. (*ALFRED leads MARION to her sister.*)

*Alf.* I have been telling Grace, dear Marion, that you are her charge; my precious trust at parting. And when I come back and reclaim you, dearest, and the bright prospect of our married life lies stretched before us, it shall be one of our chief pleasures to consult how we can make Grace happy; how we can anticipate her wishes; how we can show our gratitude and love to her; how we can return her something of the debt she will have heaped upon us. And when the time comes, — as it must one day — I wonder it has never come yet, but Grace knows best, for Grace is always right — when *she* will want a friend to open her whole heart to, and to be to her something of what

she has been to us, — then, Marion, how faithful we will prove, and what delight to us to know that she, our dear good sister, loves and is loved again, as we would have her! And when all that is past, and we are old, and living (as we must!) together, — close together — talking often of old times — these shall be our favorite times among them — this day most of all; and, telling each other what we thought and felt, and hoped and feared, at parting; and how we couldn't bear to say good-by —

*Brit.* Coach coming through the wood!

*Alf.* Yes! I am ready — and how we met again, so happily, in spite of all; we'll make this day the happiest in all the year, and keep it as a treble birthday. Shall we, dear?

*Grace.* (*Eagerly.*) Yes! Yes! Alfred, don't linger. There's no time. Say good-by to Marion. And Heaven be with you! (*ALFRED embraces MARION.*)

*Dr. J.* Farewell, my boy! To talk about any serious correspondence or serious affections, and engagements, and so forth, in such a — ha, ha, ha! — you know what I mean, — why that, of course, would be sheer nonsense. All I can say is, that if you and Marion should continue in the same foolish minds, I shall not object to have you for a son-in-law one of these days.

*Brit.* Over the bridge!

*Alf.* (*Shaking DR. JEDDLER'S hand.*) Let it come! Think of me sometimes, my old friend and guardian, as seriously as you can! Adieu, Mr. Snitchey! Farewell, Mr. Craggs!

*Brit.* Coming down the road!

*Alf.* A kiss of Clemency Newcome, for long acquaintance' sake! Shake hands, Britain! Marion, dearest heart, good-by! Sister Grace! remember!

[*Exit.* GRACE *looks after him.* MARION *looks away.*

*Grace.* He waves his hat to you, my love. Your chosen husband, darling. Look!

[MARION *turns and looks a moment, then falls on GRACE'S neck.*

*Mar.* (*Sobbing.*) O, Grace! God bless you! But I cannot bear to see it, Grace! It breaks my heart.

## "SNITCHEY AND CRAGGS."

SCENE: A Law Office. MESSRS. SNITCHEY *and* CRAGGS seated at opposite sides of a desk. MR. WARDEN in an arm-chair near them. On the table, numerous law papers, a box from which they have been taken, and two lighted candles.

- *Snitchey.* (Taking up a paper.) That's all. Really there's no other resource. No other resource.

*Warden.* All lost, spent, wasted, pawned, borrowed, and sold, eh?

*Snit.* All.

*War.* Nothing else to be done, you say?

*Snit.* Nothing at all.

*War.* (After reflection.) And I am not even personally safe in England? You hold to that, do you?

*Snit.* In no part of the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Ireland.

*War.* A mere prodigal son, with no father to go back to, no swine to keep, and no husks to share with them? Eh? (Mr. SNITCHEY coughs.) Ruined at thirty! Humph!

*Snit.* Not ruined, Mr. Warden. Not so bad as that. You have done a good deal towards it, I must say, but you are not ruined. A little nursing —

*War.* A little devil!

*Snit.* Mr. Craggs, will you oblige me with a pinch of snuff? Thank you, sir.

*War.* You talk of nursing. How long nursing?



*Snit.* How long nursing? (*Dusts the snuff from his fingers, and makes a mental calculation.*) For your involved estate, sir? In good hands? S. and C.'s, say? Six or seven years.

*War.* (*Impatiently.*) To starve for six or seven years!

*Snit.* To starve for six or seven years, Mr. Warden, would be very uncommon indeed. You might get another estate by showing yourself, the while. But we don't think you could do it, — speaking for Self and Craggs, — and consequently don't advise it.

*War.* What do you advise?

*Snit.* Nursing, I say. Some few years of nursing by Self and Craggs would bring it round. But, to enable us to make terms, and hold terms, and you to keep terms, you must go away; you must live abroad. As to starvation, we could insure you some hundreds a year to starve upon, even in the beginning, — I dare say, Mr. Warden.

*War.* Hundreds! And I have spent thousands!

*Snit.* (*Putting his papers away.*) That, there is no doubt about. No doubt a—bout.

*War.* After all, my iron-headed friend —

*Snit.* (*Pointing to CRAGGS.*) Self and — excuse me — Craggs.

*War.* I beg Mr. Craggs's pardon. After all, my iron-headed friends, you don't know half my ruin yet. (*SNITCHEY and CRAGGS start, and stare at him.*) I am not only deep in debt, but I am deep in —

*Snit.* Not in love!

*War.* Yes! (*Falls back in his chair, and surveys them with his hands in his pockets.*) Deep in love.

*Snit.* And not with an heiress, sir?

*War.* Not with an heiress.

*Snit.* Nor a rich lady?

*War.* Nor a rich lady, that I know of—except in beauty and merit.

*Snit.* A single lady, I trust?

*War.* Certainly.

*Snit.* (*Suddenly squaring around to him.*) It's not one of Dr. Jeddler's daughters?

*War.* Yes!

*Snit.* Not his younger daughter?

*War.* Yes.

*Snit.* (*Much relieved.*) Mr. Craggs, will you oblige me with another pinch of snuff? Thank you! I am happy to say it don't signify, Mr. Warden; she's engaged, sir, she's bespoke. My partner can corroborate me. We know the fact.

*Craggs.* We know the fact.

*War.* Why, so do I, perhaps. What of that? Are you men of the world, and did you never hear of a woman changing her mind?

*Snit.* There certainly have been actions for breach, brought against both spinsters and widows; but, in the majority of cases—

*War.* (*Impatiently.*) Cases! Don't talk to me of cases! The general precedent is in a much larger volume than any of your law books. Besides, do you think I have lived six weeks in the Doctor's house for nothing?

*Snit.* (*To CRAGGS.*) I think, sir, that, of all the scrapes Mr. Warden's horses have brought him into at one time and another, the worst scrape may turn

out to be, if he talks in this way, his having been ever left by one of them at the Doctor's garden wall, with three broken ribs, a snapped collar-bone, and the Lord knows how many bruises. \* We didn't think so much of it at the time, when we knew he was going on well under the Doctor's hands and roof; but it looks bad now, sir. Bad? It looks very bad. Doctor Jeddler too — our client, Mr. Craggs.

*Craggs.* Mr. Alfred Heathfield, too — a sort of client, Mr. Snitchey.

*War.* Mr. Michael Warden too, — a kind of client, and no bad one either, having played the fool for ten or twelve years. However, Mr. Michael Warden has sown his wild oats now, — there's their crop, in that box; and he means to repent and be wise. And, in proof of it, Mr. Michael Warden means, if he can, to marry Marion, the Doctor's lovely daughter, and to carry her away with him.

*Snit.* Really, Mr. Craggs —

*War.* Really, Mr. Snitchey, and Mr. Craggs, partners both, you know your duty to your clients; and you know well enough, I am sure, that it is no part of it to interfere in a mere love affair, which I am obliged to confide to you. I am not going to carry the young lady off without her own consent. There's nothing illegal in it. I never was Mr. Heathfield's bosom friend. I violate no confidence of his. I love where he loves; and I mean to win where he would win, if I can.

*Snit.* (*Anxiously.*) He can't, Mr. Craggs; he can't do it, sir. She dotes on Mr. Alfred.

*War.* Does she?

*Snit.* Mr Craggs, she dotes on him, sir.

*War.* I didn't live six weeks, some few months ago, in the Doctor's house for nothing; and I doubted that soon. She would have doted on him, if her sister could have brought it about; but I watched them. Marion avoided his name, avoided the subject; shrunk from the least allusion to it, with evident distress.

*Snit.* Why should she, Mr. Craggs, you know? Why should she, sir?

*War.* I don't know why she should, though there are many likely reasons; but I know she does. She was very young when she made the engagement, — if it may be called one; I am not even sure of that, — and has repented of it, perhaps. Perhaps — it seems a foppish thing to say, but upon my soul I don't mean it in that light — she may have fallen in love with me, as I have fallen in love with her.

*Snit.* He, he! Mr. Alfred, her old playfellow too, you remember, Mr. Craggs; knew her almost from a baby!

*War.* Which makes it the more probable that she may be tired of his idea, and not indisposed to exchange it for the newer one of another lover, who presents himself under romantic circumstances; has the not unfavorable reputation — with a country girl — of having lived thoughtlessly and gayly, without doing much harm to anybody; and who, for his youth and figure, and so forth, — this may seem foppish again, but upon my soul I don't mean it in that light, — might, perhaps, pass muster in a crowd with Mr. Alfred himself.

*Snit.* (*Aside.*) A dangerous sort of fellow to

seem to catch the spark he wants from a young lady's eyes.

*War.* (*Rising, and taking SNITCHY by the button.*) Now, observe, Snitchy, and Craggs (*takes him by the button also*), I don't ask you for any advice. You are right to keep quite aloof from all parties in such a matter. I am briefly going to review, in half a dozen words, my position and intention, and then I shall leave it to you to do the best for me, in money matters, that you can; seeing that, if I run away with the Doctor's beautiful daughter (as I hope to do, and to become another man under her bright influence), it will be, for the moment, more chargeable than running away alone. But I shall soon make all that up in an altered life.

*Snit.* I think it will be better not to hear this, Mr. Craggs? (*Both listen attentively.*)

*Craggs.* I think not.

*War.* Well! You needn't hear it. I'll mention it, however. I don't mean to ask the Doctor's consent, because he wouldn't give it me. But I mean to do the Doctor no wrong or harm, because (besides there being nothing serious in such trifles, as he says) I hope to rescue his child, my Marion, from what I see — I *know* — she dreads, and contemplates with misery; that is, the return of this old lover. If anything in the world is true, it is true that she dreads his return. Nobody is injured so far. I am so harried and worried here, just now, that I lead the life of a flying-fish. I skulk about in the dark; I am shut out of my own house, and warned off my own grounds; but that house and those grounds, and

many an acre besides, will come back to me one day, as you know and say; and Marion will probably be richer — on your showing, who are never sanguine — ten years hence, as my wife, than as the wife of Alfred Heathfield, whose return she dreads (remember that), and in whom, or in any man, my passion is not surpassed. Who is injured yet? It is a fair case throughout. My right is as good as his, if she decide in my favor, and I will try my right by her alone. You will like to know no more after this, and I will tell you no more. Now you know my purpose, and wants. When must I leave here?

*Snit.* In a week. Mr. Craggs?

*Craggs.* In something less, I should say.

*War.* In a month. This day month. To-day is Thursday. Succeed or fail, on this day month I go.

*Snit.* It's too long a delay — much too long. But let it be so. (*Aside.*) I thought he'd have stipulated for three. Are you going? Good night, sir!

*War.* Good night! You'll live to see me making a good use of riches yet. Henceforth the star of my destiny is — Marion!

*Snit.* (*Lighting him out.*) Take care of the stairs, sir, for she don't shine there. Good night!

*War.* Good night!

[*Exit* WARDEN. SNITCHEY and CRAGGS stand staring at each other.

*Snit.* What do you think of all this, Mr. Craggs? (*CRAGGS shakes his head.*) It was our opinion, on the day when that release was executed, that there was something curious in the parting of that pair, I recollect.

*Craggs.* It was.

*Snit.* Perhaps he deceives himself altogether. (*Locks his box, and puts it away.*) Or, if he don't, a little bit of fickleness and perfidy is not a miracle, Mr. Craggs. And yet I thought that pretty face was very true. I thought (*puts on his coat and gloves, and snuffs out one candle*) that I had even seen her character becoming stronger and more resolved of late — more like her sister's.

*Craggs.* Mrs. Craggs was of the same opinion.

*Snit.* (*Shaking his head.*) I'd really give a trifle to-night if I could believe that Mr. Warden was reckoning without his host; but, light-headed, capricious, and unballasted as he is, he knows something of the world and its people (he ought to, for he has bought what he does know dear enough); and I can't quite think that. We had better not interfere; we can do nothing, Mr. Craggs, but keep quiet.

*Craggs.* Nothing.

*Snit.* Our friend the Doctor makes light of such things; I hope he mayn't stand in need of his philosophy. Our friend Alfred talks of the battle of life; I hope he mayn't be cut down early in the day. Have you got your hat, Mr. Craggs? I am going to put the other candle out.

*Craggs.* All ready.

[*SNITCHEY puts out the other candle, and exeunt omnes.*

## HOME.

SCENE, DR. JEDDLER'S Study. DR. JEDDLER *in his easy-chair*; GRACE, *sewing*; MARION, *reading aloud*.

*Marion. (Reading.)* "And being in her own home, her home made exquisitely dear by these remembrances, she now began to know that the great trial of her heart must soon come on, and could not be delayed. O Home, our comforter and friend when others fall away, to part with whom, at any step between the cradle and the grave" —

*Grace.* Marion, my love!

*Dr. J.* Why, Puss! What's the matter?

*Mar. (Reads, with trembling voice.)* "To part with whom, at any step between the cradle and the grave, is always sorrowful. O Home, so true to us, so often slighted in return, be lenient to them that turn away from thee, and do not haunt their erring footsteps too reproachfully! Let no kind looks, no well-remembered smiles be seen upon thy phantom face. Let no ray of affection, welcome, gentleness, forbearance, cordiality, shine from thy white head. Let no old loving word, or tone, rise up in judgment against thy deserter; but if thou canst look harshly and severely, do, in mercy to the Penitent."

*Grace.* Dear Marion, read no more to-night.

*Mar. (Closing the book.)* I cannot. The words seem all on fire!

*Dr. J. (Laughing, and patting her on the head.)*



What! overcome by a story-book! Print and paper! Well, well, it's all one. It's as rational to make a serious matter of print and paper as of anything else. But, dry your eyes, love, dry your eyes. I dare say the heroine has got home again long ago, and made it up all round — and if she hasn't, a real home is only four walls; and a fictitious one, mere rags and ink. (CLEMENCY NEWCOME *looks in at the door*, c.) What's the matter now?

*New.* It's only me, Mister.

*Dr. F.* And what's the matter with *you*?

*New.* (*Entering.*) O, bless you, nothing ain't the matter with me. Nothing ain't the matter with me; but — come a little closer, Mister. (DR. JEDDLER *approaches her.*)

*New.* You said I wasn't to give you one before them, you know.

*Dr. F.* One? What?

*New.* (*Hunts first in one pocket, and then in the other, and draws out a letter, which she hands to DR. JEDDLER; he opens it slowly.*) Britain was riding by on an errand, and see the mail come in, and waited for it. There's A. H. in the corner. (*Aside.*) Mr. Alfred's on his journey home, I bet. We shall have a wedding in the house — there was two spoons in my saucer this morning. O Luck, how slow he opens it!

*Dr. F.* Here! Girls! I can't help it; I never could keep a secret in my life. There are not many secrets, indeed, worth being kept in such a — Well! never mind that. Alfred's coming home, my dears, directly.

*Mar.* Directly?

*Dr. F.* (*Pinching her cheek.*) What! The story-book is soon forgotten! I thought the news would dry those tears. Yes. Let it be a surprise, he says, here. But I can't let it be a surprise. He must have a welcome.

*Mar.* Directly!

*Dr. F.* Why, perhaps, not what your impatience calls directly, but pretty soon, too. Let us see! Let us see! To-day is Thursday — is it not? Then he promises to be here, this day month.

*Mar.* (*Softly.*) This day month!

*Grace.* (*Kissing her.*) A gay day and a holiday for us. Long looked forward to, dearest, and come at last.

[*DR. JEDDLER returns to his easy-chair, and reads the letter again.*]

*Dr. F.* (*Looking at the fire.*) Ah! The day was, when you and he, Grace, used to trot about, arm-in-arm, in his holiday time, like a couple of walking dolls. You remember?

*Grace.* (*Sewing.*) I remember!

*Dr. F.* This day month, indeed! That hardly seems a twelvemonth ago. And where was my little Marion then!

*Mar.* Never far from her sister, however little. Grace was everything to me, even when she was a young child herself.

*Dr. F.* True, Puss, true. She was a staid little woman, was Grace, and a wise housekeeper, and a busy, quiet, pleasant body; bearing with our humors, and anticipating our wishes, and always ready to forget

her own, even in those times. I never knew you positive or obstinate, Grace, my darling, even then, on any subject but one.

*Grace.* I am afraid I have changed sadly for the worse since. What was that one, father?

*Dr. F.* Alfred, of course. Nothing would serve you, but you must be called Alfred's wife; so we called you Alfred's wife; and you liked it better, I believe (odd as it seems now), than being called a Duchess, if we could have made you one.

*Grace.* Indeed!

*Dr. F.* Why, don't you remember?

*Grace.* I think I remember something of it, but not much. It's so long ago. (*Hums a tune.*) Alfred will find a real wife soon, and that will be a happy time, indeed, for all of us. My three years' trust is nearly at an end, Marion. It has been a very easy one. I shall tell Alfred, when I give you back to him, that you have loved him dearly all the time, and that he has never once needed my good services. May I tell him so, love?

*Mar.* Tell him, dear Grace, that there<sup>e</sup> never was a trust so generously, nobly, steadfastly discharged; and that I have loved *you*, all the time, dearer and dearer every day; and O! how dearly now!

*Grace.* Nay! I can scarcely tell him that; we will leave my deserts to Alfred's imagination. It will be liberal enough, dear Marion; like your own.

[*Curtain.*

## A MYSTERY.

SCENE: Kitchen in DR. JEDDLER'S house. *Door, c., leading into garden; two doors, R. Stove, L. A table, c.* BRITAIN seated, a pipe in his mouth; a mug of beer at his elbow. *Enter, R., CLEMENCY NEWCOME, and sits at table opposite BRITAIN.*

*Britain.* (*Nodding to NEWCOME.*) Well, Clemmy, how are you by this time, and what's the news?

*Newcome.* A letter from Mr. Heathfield. He's coming home.

*Brit.* Is he, indeed! (*Puffs slowly at his pipe.*) There'll be another job for Snitchey and Craggs, I suppose. More witnessing for you and me, perhaps, Clemmy!

*New.* Lor! I wish it was me, Britain!

*Brit.* Wish what was you?

*New.* A-going to be married.

*Brit.* (*Laughing heartily.*) Yes! you're a likely subject for that! Poor Clem!

*New.* (*Laughing.*) Yes, I'm a likely subject for that — ain't I?

*Brit.* You'll never be married, you know.

*New.* Don't you think I ever shall, though?

*Brit.* (*Shaking his head.*) Not a chance of it!

*New.* Only think! Well! — I suppose *you* mean to, Britain, one of these days — don't you?

*Brit.* (*Blowing smoke out of his mouth and reflecting.*) Well, I'm not altogether clear about it. However, I suppose I may come to that at last. — Ye-es — very likely.

*New.* I wish her joy, whoever she may be.

*Brit.* O, she'll have that, safe enough.

*New.* (*Leaning with both elbows on the table and staring at the candle.*) But she wouldn't have led quite such a joyful life as she will lead, and wouldn't have had quite such a sociable sort of husband as she will have, if it hadn't been for — not that I went to do it, for it was accidental, I am sure — if it hadn't been for me — now would she, Britain?

*Brit.* (*Gravely.*) Certainly not. O! I'm greatly beholden to you, you know, Clem.

*New.* Lor, how nice that is to think of! (*Anoints her elbow with candle grease.*)

*Brit.* You see I've made a good many investigations of one sort and another in my time, having been always of an inquiring turn of mind; and I've read a good many books about the general Rights of things and Wrongs of things, for I went into the literary line myself when I began life.

*New.* Did you, though?

*Brit.* Yes! I was hid for the best part of two years behind a book stall, ready to fly out if anybody pocketed a volume; and after that, I was light porter to a stay and mantua-maker, in which capacity I was employed to carry about, in oilskin baskets, nothing but deceptions — which soured my spirits and disturbed my confidence in human nature; and after that, I heard a world of discussions in this house, which soured my spirits fresh; and my opinion after all is, that, as a safe and comfortable sweetener of the same, and as a pleasant guide through life, there's nothing like a nutmeg-grater — (*NEWCOME is about to speak,*

*but he stops her by putting out his hand) — combined with a thimble.*

*New.* (*Folding her arms and patting her elbows.*) Do as you wold, you know, and cetrer, eh? Such a short cut — ain't it?

*Brit.* I'm not sure that it's what would be considered good philosophy. I've my doubts about that; but it were as well, and saves a quantity of snarling, which the genuine article don't always.

*New.* See how you used to go on once, yourself, you know!

*Brit.* Ah! But the most extraordinary thing, Clemmy, is, that I should live to be brought round, through you. That's the strange part of it. Through you! Why, I suppose you haven't so much as half an idea in your head.

*New.* (*Shaking her head and laughing.*) No, I don't suppose I have.

*Brit.* I'm pretty sure of it.

*New.* O! I dare say you're right. I don't pretend to none. I don't want any.

*Brit.* (*Taking his pipe from his mouth and laughing.*) What a natural you are, Clemmy! (*Wipes his eyes.* NEWCOME *also laughs.*) I can't help liking you; you're a regular good creature in your way, so shake hands, Clem. Whatever happens, I'll always take notice of you, and be a friend to you.

*New.* Will you? Well! that's very good of you.

*Brit.* (*Knocking the ashes out of his pipe.*) Yes, yes, I'll stand by you. Hark! That's a curious noise!

*New.* Noise!

*Brit.* A footstep outside. Somebody dropping from the wall, it sounded like. Are they all abed up stairs?

*New.* Yes, all abed by this time.

*Brit.* Didn't you hear anything?

*New.* No. (*Both listen attentively.*)

*Brit.* (*Rising and taking down a lantern.*) I tell you what, I'll have a look round, before I go to bed myself, for satisfaction's sake. Undo the door while I light this, Clemmy! (*Lights lantern; NEWCOME opens c. d.*)

*New.* It's all your fancy. You'll have your walk for your pains.

*Brit.* (*Taking his lantern and the poker.*) Very likely. (*Exit c.*)

*New.* (*Looking after him.*) It's as quiet as a church-yard, and almost as ghostly, too.

*Enter MARION, R.*

*New.* (*Turning.*) What's that!

*Mar.* Hush! You have always loved me — have you not!

*New.* Loved you, child! You may be sure I have!

*Mar.* I am sure. And I may trust you — may I not? There is no one else just now, in whom I *can* trust.

*New.* (*Heartily.*) Yes.

*Mar.* (*Pointing to the door, c.*) There is some one there, whom I must see, and speak with to-night. (*The figure of a man appears in the darkness outside. NEWCOME starts back.*) Michael Warden, for God's sake retire! Not now! In another moment you may

be discovered. Not now! Wait, if you can, in some concealment. I will come presently. (*Figure vanishes. To NEWCOME.*) Don't go to bed. Wait here for me! I have been seeking to speak to you for an hour past. O, be true to me!

[*Exit MARION, R., NEWCOME falls trembling into a chair, L. C.*

*Brit.* (*Entering, C. D.*) All still and peaceable. Nobody there. Fancy, I suppose. (*Locks the door.*) One of the effects of having a lively imagination. Halloa! Why, what's the matter?

*New.* (*Nervously.*) Matter! That's good in you, Britain—that is! After going and frightening one out of one's life with noises, and lanterns, and I don't know what all. Matter! O, yes!

*Brit.* (*Blowing out lantern and hanging it up.*) If you're frightened out of your life by a lantern, Clemmy, that apparition's very soon got rid of. But you're as bold as brass in general, and were, after the noise of the lantern, too. What have you taken into your head? Not an idea, eh?

*New.* (*Putting away table and chairs.*) Good-night, Britain.

*Brit.* (*Staring at her.*) Well, well! There's no accounting for a woman's whims! Good-night!

[*Exit R. U. E., with candle.*

*Mar.* (*Re-entering, R.*) Open the door, and stand there close beside me, while I speak to him, outside.

[*NEWCOME unlocks the C. D.; turns to MARION, and throws her arms about her neck.*

*New.* (*Sobbing.*) It's little that I know, my dear, very little; but I know that this should not be. Think of what you do!



*Mar.* (*Gently.*) I have thought of it many times.

*New.* Once more! Till to-morrow. (*MARION shakes her head.*) For Mr. Alfred's sake! Him that you used to love so dearly, once!

*Mar.* (*Hiding her face in her hands.*) Once!

*New.* Let me go out. I'll tell him what you like. Don't cross the door-step to-night. I'm sure no good will come of it. O, it was an unhappy day when Mr. Warden was ever brought here! Think of your good father, darling — of your sister.

*Mar.* (*Hastily raising her head.*) I have. You don't know what I do. You don't know what I do. I *must* speak to him. You are the best and truest friend in all the world for what you have said to me, but I must take this step. Will you go with me, Clemency (*Kisses her*), or shall I go alone?

[*NEWCOME slowly opens the door, and they go out together, MARION holding NEWCOME'S hand. Curtain.*]

## THE WELCOME.

SCENE: DR. JEDDLER'S Parlors, *arranged for an evening party.* Present, GRACE and MARION.

*Grace.* (*Arranging a wreath on MARION'S head.*) The next wreath I adjust on this fair head will be a marriage wreath, or I am no true prophet, dear.

*Marion.* (*Embracing her.*) A moment, Grace. Don't leave me yet. Are you sure that I want nothing more?

*Grace.* My art can go no farther, dear girl; nor your beauty. I never saw you look so beautiful as now.

*Mar.* I never was so happy.

*Grace.* Ay, but there is a greater happiness in store. In such another home, as cheerful and as bright as this looks now, Alfred and his young wife will soon be living.

*Mar.* (*Smiling.*) It is a happy home, Grace, in your fancy. I can see it in your eyes. I know it *will* be happy, dear. How glad I am to know it!

*Dr. J.* (*Entering, L.*) Well, here we are, all ready for Alfred, eh? He can't be here until pretty late — an hour or so before midnight — so there'll be plenty of time for making merry before he comes. He'll not find us with the ice unbroken. (*Calling off.*) Pile up the fire here, Britain! Let it shine upon the holly till it winks again! It's a world of nonsense, Puss; true lovers and all the rest of it — all nonsense: but we'll be nonsensical with the rest of 'em, and give our true

lover a mad welcome. Upon my word (*looks proudly at them*), I'm not clear to-night, among other absurdities, but that I'm the father of two handsome girls.

*Mar.* All that one of them has ever done, or may do — may do, dearest father — to cause you pain or grief, forgive her — forgive her now, when her heart is full. Say that you forgive her. That you will forgive her. That she shall always share your love, and — (*Hides her face on his shoulder.*)

*Dr. F.* Tut, tut, tut! Forgive! What have I to forgive? Heydey! if our true lovers come back to flurry us like this, we must hold them at a distance, until we're properly prepared to meet 'em. Kiss me, Puss. Forgive! Why, what a silly child you are! If you had vexed and crossed me fifty times a day, instead of not at all, I'd forgive you everything, but such a supplication. Kiss me again, Puss. There! Prospective and retrospective — a clear score between us. Pile up the fire here! Would you freeze the people on this bleak December night! Let us be light, and warm, and merry, or I'll not forgive some of you!

[*Company begins to assemble. Enter MR. and MRS. CRAGGS, arm in arm, c. d.; MRS. SNITCHEY, alone. Salutations exchanged. More guests arrive; music, (on the stage); Sets formed for dancing.*]

*Dr. F.* Why! where is Mr. Snitchey, ma'am? What's become of *him*?

*Mrs. Snitchey.* I don't know, Doctor Jeddler; doubtless Mr. Craggs does. *I* am never told.

*Mrs. Craggs.* That nasty office!

*Mrs. Snit.* I wish it was burnt down!

*Craggs.* (*Looking uneasily about.*) He's—he's—there's a little matter of business that keeps my partner rather late.

*Mrs. Snit.* Oh—h! Business! Don't tell me!

*Mrs. Craggs.* We know what *business* means. I wonder *you* could come away, Mr. Craggs.

*Mrs. Snit.* Mr. Craggs is fortunate, I'm sure.

*Mrs. Craggs.* That office so engrosses 'em!

*Mrs. Snit.* A person with an office has no business to be married at all.

*Mrs. Craggs.* (*To MR. CRAGGS.*) Your Snitch-eyes are deceiving you behind your back, sir, and you'll find it out, when it's too late.

*Craggs.* (*Going to GRACE.*) Good evening, ma'am. You look charmingly. Your—Miss—your sister, Miss Marion, is she—

*Grace.* Oh, she's quite well, Mr. Craggs.

*Craggs.* Yes—I—is she here?

*Grace.* Here! Don't you see her yonder? Going to dance?

[CRAGGS *puts on his spectacles, and looks; coughs; removes the spectacles, and puts them away. Dancing commences, c.; CRAGGS looks on, R. SNITCHEY enters, unobserved, C. D.; crosses to CRAGGS, R., and touches him on the arm.*

*Craggs.* (*Starting.*) Is he gone?

*Snit.* Hush! He has been with me for three hours and more. He went over everything. He looked into all our arrangements for him, and was very particular indeed. He—Humph!

[*Dance breaks up. MARION passes by without seeing them; goes slowly through the crowd, and disappears, L., looking over her shoulder at GRACE, as she goes out.*

*Craggs.* (R.) You see! All safe and well. He didn't recur to that subject, I suppose?

*Snit.* (R.) Not a word.

*Craggs.* And is he really gone? Is he safe away?

*Snit.* He keeps to his word. He drops down the river with the tide, in that shell of a boat of his, and so goes out to sea on this dark night! — a dare-devil he is — before the wind. There's no such lonely road anywhere else. That's one thing. The tide flows, he says, an hour before midnight — about this time. I'm glad it's over! (*Wiping his forehead.*)

*Craggs.* What do you think about —

*Snit.* (*Looking straight before him.*) Hush! I understand you. Don't mention names, and don't let us seem to be talking secrets. I don't know what to think, and, to tell you the truth, I don't care now. It's a great relief. His self-love deceived him, I suppose. Perhaps the young lady coquetted a little. The evidence would seem to point that way. Alfred not arrived?

*Craggs.* Not yet. Expected every minute.

*Snit.* (*Wiping his forehead again.*) Good! It's a great relief. I haven't been so nervous since we've been in partnership. I intend to spend the evening now, Mr. Craggs.

[MRS. CRAGGS and MRS. SNITCHEY join them.]

*Mrs. Snit.* (R.) It has been the theme of general comment, Mr. Snitchey. I hope the office is satisfied.

*Snit.* Satisfied with what, my dear?

*Mrs. Snit.* With the exposure of a defenceless woman to ridicule and remark. That is quite in the way of the office, *that* is.

*Mrs. Craggs.* I really, myself, have been so long accustomed to connect the office with everything opposed to domesticity, that I am glad to know it as the avowed enemy of my peace. There is something honest in that, at all events.

*Craggs.* My dear, your good opinion is invaluable, but *I* never avowed that the office was the enemy of your peace.

*Mrs. Craggs.* No, not you, indeed! You wouldn't be worthy of the office, if you had the candor to.

*Snit.* (*Giving* MRS. SNITCHEY *his arm.*) As to my having been away to-night, my dear, the deprivation has been mine, I'm sure; but, as Mr. Craggs knows —

*Mrs. Snit.* (*Drawing him aside, L. c.*) Mr. Snitchey, look at that man! (*Points to CRAGGS.*) Will you do me the favor to look at him?

*Snit.* At which man, my dear?

*Mrs. Snit.* Your chosen companion; *I'm* no companion to you, Mr. Snitchey.

*Snit.* Yes, yes, you are, my dear.

*Mrs. Snit.* (*Smiling majestically*) No, no, I'm not. I know my station. Will you look at your chosen companion, Mr. Snitchey; at your referee; at the keeper of your secrets; at the man you trust; at your other self, in short? (*SNITCHEY looks at*

Craggs.) If you can look that man in the eye this night, and not know that you are deluded, practised upon, made the victim of his arts, and bent down prostrate to his will by some unaccountable fascination, which it is impossible to explain, and against which no warning of mine is of the least avail, all I can say is — I pity you!

*Mrs. Craggs.* (*To Mr. CRAGGS, R.*) Is it possible, Mr. Craggs, that you can so blind yourself to your Snitcheys as not to feel your true position? Do you mean to say that you have seen your Snitcheys come into this room, and have not plainly seen that there is reservation, cunning, treachery, in the man? Can you have the least doubt that there's something weighing on the conscience of your precious Snitcheys (if he has a conscience), that won't bear the light? Did ever anybody but your Snitcheys come to festive entertainments like a burglar?

[MR. CRAGGS *shrugs his shoulders, and does not reply.* *A country dance is called.*

*Craggs.* (*Approaching MRS. SNITCHEY.*) May I have the pleasure, ma'am?

*Mrs. Snit.* Why don't you ask some one else, Mr. Craggs? You'll be glad, I know, if I decline.

[*She takes his arm.*

*Snit.* (*Crossing to MRS. CRAGGS.*) Will you do me the honor?

*Mrs. Craggs.* (*Jocosely.*) Really, Mr. Snitchey! I wonder you can dance out of the office!

[*Takes his arm; they join the dancers.*

*Exit GRACE, L.; DR. JEDDLER rings.*

*Enter BRITAIN, L. U. E.*

*Dr. F.* (L.) Anything been seen, Britain? Anything been heard?

*Brit.* Too dark to see far, sir. Too much noise inside the house to hear.

*Dr. F.* That's right! The gayer welcome for him. How goes the time?

*Brit.* Just twelve, sir. He can't be long, sir.

*Dr. F.* Stir up the fire, and throw another log upon it. Let him see his welcome blazing out upon the night—good boy!—as he comes along.

[*Exit* BRITAIN, L. U. E. *The dance goes on.*

*Enter* NEWCOME *hastily*, L. *She goes to* C. D., *and meets* ALFRED *as he is entering. She recoils with a cry.*

*Alf.* Clemency, don't you know me?

*New.* (*Pushing him back.*) Don't come in! Go away! Don't ask me why. Don't come in.

*Alf.* What is the matter?

*New.* I don't know. I—I am afraid to think. Go back. (*A scream in room, L.*) Hark! (*GRACE enters, followed by her father, the latter with a paper in his hand. Both hurry to door, c.*)

*Alf.* (*Catching* GRACE *in his arms.*) Grace! What is it? Is she dead? (*She disengages herself, and falls at his feet. The guests crowd around them. ALFRED, on his knees, bends over GRACE.*) What is it? Will no one look at me? Will no one speak to me? Does no one know me? Is there no voice, among you all, to tell me what it is?

*Voices.* (*In a low murmur.*) She is gone!

*Alf.* Gone?



*Dr. F.* (*Covering his face with his hands.*)  
Fled, my dear Alfred! Gone from her home and  
us! To-night! She writes that she has made her  
innocent and blameless choice — entreats that we  
will forgive her — prays that we will not forget her —  
and is gone!

*Alf.* (*Starting up.*) With whom? Where?  
[*Falls back into his former position. Tableau. Curtain.*]

## "THE NUTMEG-GRATER."

SCENE: Bar-room of the Inn; L. C. *Time, six years later. Tea table spread for two; near window, R., another table; chairs, &c.*

*Brit.* (*Going to c. D., and looking down the road.*) Mrs. Britain is rather late. It's tea time. (*Steps out and looks up at the house.*) It's just the sort of house I should wish to stop at, if I didn't keep it. (*Re-enters.*) She's a long time coming. (*Sits down.*) She hadn't much to do, I think. There were a few little matters of business after market, but not many. (*Wagon heard.*) O! here we are at last! (*Rising and going to door.*) You're late, Clemmy!

*Mrs. B.* (CLEMENCY NEWCOME.) Why, you see, Ben, I've had a deal to do! (*Counting bundles as BRITAIN brings them in.*) Eight, nine, ten — where's eleven? O! my basket's eleven! It's all right. (*Calling off, c. D.*) Put the horse up, Harry, and if he coughs again give him a warm mash to-night. Eight, nine, ten. Why, where's eleven? O, I forgot, it's all right. How's the children, Ben?

*Brit.* Hearty, Clemmy, hearty.

*Mrs. B.* Bless their precious faces! (*Taking off her bonnet and smoothing her hair.*) Give us a kiss, old man. (BRITAIN *complies.*) I think (*drawing papers and account books from her pocket*) I've done everything. Bills all settled — turnips sold — brewer's account looked into and paid — 'bacco pipes ordered — seventeen pound four paid into the Bank

—Dr. Heathfield's charge for little Clem — you'll guess what that is — Dr. Heathfield won't take nothing again, Ben.

*Brit.* I thought he wouldn't.

*Mrs. B.* No. He says whatever family you was to have, Ben, he'd never put you to the cost of a half-penny. Not if you was to have twenty. (*MR. BRITAIN looks serious, and stares at the wall.*) Ain't it kind of him?

*Brit.* Very. It's the sort of kindness that I wouldn't presume upon, on any account.

*Mrs. B.* No, of course not. Then there's the pony — he fetched eight pound two; and that ain't bad — is it?

*Brit.* It's very good.

*Mrs. B.* (c.) I'm glad you're pleased! I thought you would be; and I think that's all, and so no more at present from yours and cetrer, C. Britain. Ha, ha, ha! There! Take all the papers, and lock 'em up. O, wait a minute. Here's a printed bill to stick on the wall. Wet from the printer's. How nice it smells!

*Brit.* (c.) (*Looking over the bill.*) What's this?

*Mrs. B.* I don't know. I haven't read a word of it.

*Brit.* (*Reading.*) "To be sold by auction, unless previously disposed of by private contract."

*Mrs. B.* They always put that.

*Brit.* Yes, but they don't always put this. Look here: "Mansion, &c. — offices, &c. — shrubberies, &c. — ring fence, &c. — Messrs. Snitchey and Craggs, &c. — ornamental portion of the unencumbered freehold

property of Michael Warden, Esquire, intending to continue to reside abroad!"

*Mrs. B.* Intending to continue to reside abroad!

*Brit.* Here it is. Look!

*Mrs. B.* (*Shaking her head sorrowfully, and patting her elbows.*) And it was only this very day that I heard it whispered at the old house, that better and plainer news had been half promised of her soon! Dear — dear — dear! There'll be heavy hearts, Ben, yonder.

*Brit.* (*Sighing.*) Ah! it's a sad thing, and I can't make it out. I left off trying, long ago.

*Mrs. B.* (*Rousing herself.*) Well! I must go and look after the children.

[*Exit L., BRITAIN fastens the bill against the wall, R.*

*Brit.* (*Putting away the papers which his wife brought home.*) What a hand she is for business, to be sure!

*Mrs. B.* (*Re-entering.*) The two boys are playing in the coach-house, and little Clem is sleeping like a picture, so we'll have tea. (*They sit at table, BRITAIN, R.; MRS. BRITAIN, L.*) It's the first time I've sat down quietly to-day, I declare. (*Hands BRITAIN his tea.*) How that bill (*cuts some bread*) does set me thinking of old times!

*Brit.* (*Drinking from his saucer.*) Ah!

*Mrs. B.* That same Mr. Michael Warden lost me my old place.

*Brit.* And got you your husband.

*Mrs. B.* Well! So he did, and many thanks to him.

*Brit.* Man's the creature of habit. (*Surveys her*

*over his saucer.*) I had somehow got used to you, Clem, and I found I shouldn't be able to get on without you. So we went and got made man and wife. Ha, ha! We! Who'd have thought it!

*Mrs. B.* Who, indeed! It was very good of you, Ben.

*Brit.* No, no, no. Nothing worth mentioning.

*Mrs. B.* O, yes it was, Ben. I'm sure I think so, and am very much obliged to you. Ah! (*looking again at the bill*), when she was known to be gone, and out of reach, dear girl, I couldn't help telling — for her sake quite as much as theirs — what I knew — could I?

*Brit.* You told it, any how. .

*Mrs. B.* And Dr. Jeddler (*puts down her teacup, and looks thoughtfully at the bill*), in his grief and passion, turned me out of house and home! I never have been so glad of anything in all my life, as that I didn't say an angry word to him, and hadn't an angry feeling towards him, even then; for he repented that truly, afterwards. How often he has sat in this room, and told me over and over again he was sorry for it! — the last time, only yesterday, when you were out. How often he has sat in this room, and talked to me, hour after hour, about one thing and another, in which he made believe to be interested! — not only for the sake of the days that are gone by, and because he knows she used to like me, Ben!

*Brit.* Why, how did you ever come to catch a glimpse of that, Clem?

*Mrs. B.* I don't know, I'm sure, (*Blows her tea.*) Bless you, I couldn't tell you, if you was to offer me a reward of a hundred pound.

[*Whilst she is speaking a stranger (MICHAEL WARDEN), cloaked and booted, stands in the open doorway, c., listening. Mr. and Mrs. BRITAIN rise hastily.*

*Brit.* (*Saluting.*) Will you please to walk up stairs, sir? There's a very nice room up stairs, sir.

*Warden.* (*Looking at Mrs. BRITAIN.*) Thank you. May I come in here?

*Mrs. B.* O, surely, if you like, sir. What would you please to want, sir? [*WARDEN reads the bill.*

*Mr. B.* Excellent property that, sir.

*War.* (*Turning to Mrs. BRITAIN.*) You were asking me —

*Mrs. B.* What you would please to take, sir?

*War.* (*Sitting at table near the window, R.*) If you will let me have a draught of ale, and will let me have it here, without being any interruption to your meal, I shall be much obliged to you.

[*Sits down and looks out of the window. Mrs. BRITAIN brings a pitcher of ale and a glass.*

*War.* (*Filling his glass and holding it up.*) To the House, ma'am! (*Drinks.*) It's a new house — is it not?

*Brit.* Not particularly new, sir.

*Mrs. B.* Between five and six years old.

*War.* I think I heard you mention Dr. Jeddler's name, as I came in. That bill reminds me of him; for I happen to know something of that story, by hearsay, and through certain connections of mine. Is the old man living?

*Mrs. B.* Yes, he's living, sir.

*War.* Much changed?

*Mrs. B.* Since when, sir?

*War.* Since his daughter — went away.

*Mrs. B.* Yes! he's greatly changed since then. He's gray and old, and hasn't the same way with him at all; but I think he's happy now. He has taken on with his sister since then, and goes to see her very often. That did him good, directly. At first, he was sadly broken down; and it was enough to make one's heart bleed, to see him wandering about, railing at the world; but a great change for the better came over him after a year or two, and then he began to like to talk about his lost daughter, and to praise her, ay, and the world too! and was never tired of saying, with the tears in his poor eyes, how beautiful and good she was. He had forgiven her, then. That was about the same time as Miss Grace's marriage. Britain, you remember?

*Brit.* I remember very well.

*War.* The sister *is* married, then. (*A pause.*) To whom?

*Mrs. B.* (*Excitedly.*) Did *you* never hear?

*War.* (*Filling his glass again.*) I should like to hear.

*Mrs. B.* Ah! It would be a long story, if it was properly told. (*Rests her chin on her hand, and shakes her head thoughtfully.*) It would be a long story, I am sure.

*War.* But told as a short one.

*Mrs. B.* (*Talking half to herself.*) Told as a short one, what would there be to tell? That they grieved together, and remembered her together, like a person dead; that they were so tender of her, never

would reproach her, called her back to one another as she used to be, and found excuses for her! Every one knows that. I'm sure *I* do. No one better. (*Wipes her eyes with her hand.*)

*War.* And so —

*Mrs. B.* And so they at last were married. They were married on her birthday — it comes round again to-morrow — very quiet, very humble like, but very happy. Mr. Alfred said, one night when they were walking in the orchard, “Grace, shall our wedding day be Marion’s birthday?” And it was.

*War.* And they have lived happily together?

*Mrs. B.* Ay. No two people ever more so. They have had no sorrow but this.

[WARDEN *looks out of the window.* MRS. BRITAIN *makes signs to* MR. BRITAIN, *points to the bill, and forms two words with her lips.* MR. BRITAIN *stares at her, then at the bill, and then at* WARDEN.]

*Brit.* (*Aside.*) Eh! what, milk and water? (*More signs from* MRS. BRITAIN.) Monthly warning! Eh! what does she say? (*More signs.*) Mice and walnuts? (*MRS. BRITAIN gives it up, and draws her chair nearer to* WARDEN.)

*War.* And what is the after history of the young lady who went away? They know it, I suppose?

*Mrs. B.* (*Shaking her head.*) I’ve heard that Dr. Jeddler is thought to know more of it than he tells. Miss Grace has had letters from her sister, saying that she was well and happy, and made much happier by her being married to Mr. Alfred; and has written letters back. But there’s a mystery about her



life and fortunes, altogether, which nothing has cleared up to this hour, and which — (*She stops.*)

*War.* And which —

*Mrs. B. (Excitedly.)* Which only one other person, I believe, could explain.

*War.* Who may that be?

*Mrs. B. (With a shriek.)* Mr. Michael Warden! (*Rising.*) You remember me, sir? (*Trembling with emotion.*) I saw just now you did! You remember me, that night in the garden. I was with her!

*War.* Yes. You were.

*Mrs. B.* Yes, sir! Yes, to be sure. This is my husband, if you please. Ben, my dear Ben, run to Miss Grace — run to Mr. Alfred — run somewhere, Ben! Bring somebody here, directly!

*War. (Interposing between BRITAIN and the door.)* Stay! What would you do?

*Mrs. B.* Let them know that you are here, sir! Let them know that they may hear of her, from your own lips; let them know that she is not quite lost to them, but that she will come home again yet, to bless her father and her loving sister — even her old servant, even me — with a sight of her sweet face. Run, Ben, run! (*Pushes him towards the door, c. WARDEN checks him. MRS. BRITAIN runs past BRITAIN and seizes WARDEN's cloak.*) Or, perhaps she's here now; perhaps she's close by. I think from your manner she is. Let me see her, sir, if you please. I waited on her when she was a little child. I saw her grow up to be the pride of all this place. I knew her when she was Mr. Alfred's promised wife. I tried to warn her when you tempted her away. I know

what her old home was when she was like the soul of it, and how it changed when she was gone and lost. Let me speak to her, if you please. (*He looks at her without speaking. A pause.*) I don't think she *can* know how truly they forgive her; how they love her; what joy it would be to them to see her once more. She may be timorous of going home. Perhaps if she sees me it may give her new heart. Only tell me truly, Mr. Warden, is she with you?

*War.* (*Shaking his head.*) She is not.

*Mrs. B.* Then she is dead! Poor Marion is dead!

[*She sits down, hides her face on the table, and weeps. BRITAIN tries to console her. Enter MR. SNITCHEY, C. D., hastily, and out of breath.*

*Snit.* (*Taking WARDEN aside.*) Good Heaven, Mr. Warden! what wind has blown — (*stops to take breath*) — you here?

*War.* An ill wind, I am afraid. If you could have heard what has just passed — how I have been besought and entreated to perform impossibilities — what confusion and affliction I carry with me!

*Snit.* I can guess it all. But why did you ever come here, my good sir?

*War.* Come! How should I know who kept the house? When I sent my servant on to you, I strolled in here because the place was new to me, and I had a natural curiosity in everything new and old in these old scenes; and it was outside the town I wanted to communicate with you first, before appearing there. I wanted to know what people would say to me. I see by your manner that you can tell me. If it were

not for your confounded caution, I should have been possessed of everything long ago.

*Snit.* Our caution! speaking for Self and Craggs — deceased. (*Glances at his hat-band and shakes his head.*) How can you reasonably blame us, Mr. Warden? It was understood between us that the subject was never to be renewed, and that it wasn't a subject on which grave and sober men like us (I made a note of your observations at the time) could interfere. Our caution, too! When Mr. Craggs, sir, went down to his respected grave in the full belief —

*War.* I had given a solemn promise of silence until I should return, whenever that might be, and I have kept it.

*Snit.* Well, sir, and I repeat it, we were bound to silence too. We were bound to silence in our duty towards ourselves, and in our duty towards a variety of clients, you among them, who were as close as wax. It was not our place to make inquiries of you on such a delicate subject. I had my suspicions, sir; but it is not six months since I have known the truth, and been assured that you lost her.

*War.* By whom?

*Snit.* By Dr. Jeddler himself, sir, who at last reposed that confidence in me voluntarily. He, and only he, has known the whole truth, years and years.

*War.* And you know it?

*Snit.* I do, sir! and I have also reason to know that it will be broken to her sister to-morrow evening. They have given her that promise. In the meantime, perhaps you'll give me the honor of your company at my house; being unexpected at your own. But, not

to run the chance of any more such difficulties as you have had here, in case you should be recognized — though you're a good deal changed; I think I might have passed you myself, Mr. Warden — we had better dine here, and walk on in the evening. It's a very good place to dine at, Mr. Warden; your own property, by-the-by. Self and Craggs (deceased) took a chop here sometimes, and had it very comfortably served. Mr. Craggs, sir, was struck off the roll of life too soon.

*War.* (*Pressing his hand to his forehead.*) Heaven forgive me for not condoling with you, but I'm like a man in a dream at present. I seem to want my wits. Mr. Craggs — yes — I am very sorry we have lost Mr. Craggs. (*Watches MR. and MRS. BRITAIN.*)

*Snit.* Mr. Craggs, sir, didn't find life, I regret to say, as easy to have and to hold as his theory made it out, or he would have been among us now. It's a great loss to me. He was my right arm, my right leg, my right ear, my right eye, was Mr. Craggs. I am paralytic without him. He bequeathed his share of the business to Mrs. Craggs, her executors, administrators, and assigns. His name remains in the Firm to this hour. I try, in a childish sort of way, to make believe, sometimes, that he's alive. You may observe that I speak for Self and Craggs — deceased, sir — deceased. (*Waving his handkerchief.*)

[WARDEN *whispers* to SNITCHEY.]

*Snit.* (*Shaking his head.*) Ah, poor thing! Yes. She was always very faithful to Marion. She was always very fond of her. Pretty Marion! Poor Marion! (*Coming down c., to MRS. BRITAIN.*) Cheer

up, Mistress — you *are* married now, you know, Clemency. (MRS. BRITAIN *sighs and shakes her head.*) Well, well! Wait till to-morrow.

Mrs. B. (*Sobbing.*) To-morrow can't bring back the dead to life, Mister.

Snit. No. It can't do that, or it would bring back Mr. Craggs, deceased. But it may bring some soothing circumstances; it may bring some comfort. Wait till to-morrow!

[*Shakes her by the hand, and goes towards*  
C. D. *Curtain.\**]

---

\* MRS. BRITAIN, at table, L. C.; MR. BRITAIN standing near her; WARDEN, near C. D. SNITCHEY, C. D., holding the handle of the half-opened door, hat in hand, looking towards MRS. BRITAIN.

## HOME AGAIN.

SCENE: Dr. Jeddler's Orchard. *Time, near sunset.*

ALFRED and GRACE seated together on the garden bench, L.; their little daughter playing near them.

*Alfred.* The time has flown, dear Grace, since then; and yet it seems a long while ago. We count by changes and events within us, not by years.

*Grace.* Yet we have years to count by, too, since Marion was with us. Six times, dear husband, counting to-night as one, we have sat here on her birthday, and spoken together of that happy return, so eagerly expected and so long deferred. Ah, when will it be! when will it be!

*Alf.* But Marion told you, in that farewell letter which she left for you upon your table, love, and which you read so often, that years must pass away before it *could* be. Did she not?

*Grace.* Yes.

*Alf.* That through those intervening years, however happy she might be, she would look forward to the time when you would meet again, and all would be made clear. The letter runs so, does it not, my dear?

*Grace.* Yes, Alfred.

*Alf.* And every other letter she has written since?

*Grace.* Except the last — some months ago — in which she spoke of you, and what you then knew, and what I was to learn to-night.

*Alf.* (*Looking at the sun.*) The appointed time was sunset.

*Grace.* Alfred, there was something in that letter — that old letter, which you say I read so often — that I have never told you. But to-night, dear husband, with that sunset drawing near, and all our life seeming to soften and become hushed with the departing day, I cannot keep it secret.

*Alf.* What is it, love?

*Grace.* When Marion went away, she wrote me, here, that you had once left her a sacred trust to me, and that now she left you, Alfred, such a trust in my hands; praying and beseeching me not to reject the affection she believed you would transfer to me when the new wound was healed, but to encourage and return it.

*Alf.* (*Taking her in his arms.*) — And make me a proud, and happy man again, Grace! Did she say so?

*Grace.* She meant, to make myself so blessed and honored in your love.

*Alf.* Hear me, my dear! (*She raises her head.*) No. Hear me so! (*Lays her head again on his shoulder.*) I know why I have never heard this passage in the letter until now. I know why no trace of it ever showed itself in any word or look of yours at that time. I know why Grace, although so true a friend to me, was hard to win to be my wife; and, knowing it, I know the priceless value of the heart I gird within my arms, and thank God for the rich possession. Look how golden and red the sun is!

*Grace.* (*Raising her head.*) Alfred, the sun is

going down. You have not forgotten what I am to know before it sets?

*Alf.* You are to know the truth of Marion's history, my love.

*Grace.* (*Imploringly.*) All the truth. Nothing veiled from me any more. That was the promise. Was it not?

*Alf.* It was.

*Grace.* Before the sun went down on Marion's birthday. And you see it, Alfred? It is sinking fast.

*Alf.* The truth is not reserved so long for me to tell, dear Grace. It is to come from other lips.

*Grace.* From other lips?

*Alf.* Yes. I know your constant heart; I know how brave you are; I know that to you a word of preparation is enough. You have said, truly, that the time is come. It is. Tell me that you have present fortitude to bear a trial — a surprise — a shock; and the messenger is waiting at the gate.

*Grace.* What messenger, and what intelligence does he bring?

*Alf.* I am pledged to say no more. Do you think you understand me?

*Grace.* I am afraid to think. Wait, Alfred! — one moment!

*Alf.* Courage, my wife! When you have firmness to receive the messenger, the messenger is waiting at the gate. The sun is setting on Marion's birthday. Courage, courage, Grace!

*Grace.* (*Looking at him.*) I am ready.

[*They rise.* ALFRED goes into the house,



*R., leading the child; GRACE stands looking after them. DR. JEDDLER, clasping MARION in his arms, stands suddenly at the gate, c. GRACE turns; MARION breaks away from her father, runs to GRACE, and falls on her neck.*

*Grace.* (*Throwing her arms about MARION.*) Oh, Marion, Marion! Oh, my sister! Oh, my heart's dear love! Oh, joy and happiness unutterable, so to meet again!

*Mar.* (*After a pause.*) When this was my dear home, Grace, as it will be now again —

*Grace.* Stay, my sweet love! A moment! O Marion, to hear you speak again!

*Mar.* When this was my dear home, Grace, as it will be now again, I loved him most devotedly. I would have died for him, though I was so young. I never slighted his affection in my secret breast, for one brief instant. Although it is so long ago, and past and gone, and everything is wholly changed, I could not bear to think that you, who loved so well, should think I did not truly love him once. I never loved him better, Grace, than when he left this very scene, upon this very day. I never loved him better, dear one, than I did that night when I left here. But he had gained, unconsciously, another heart, before I knew that I had one to give him. That heart — yours, my sister! — was so yielded up, in all its other tenderness, to me — was so devoted and so noble — that it plucked its love away, and kept its secret from all eyes but mine, and was content to sacrifice itself to me. But I knew something of its depths. I knew

the struggle it had made. I knew its high, inestimable worth to him, and his appreciation of it, let him love me as he would. I knew the debt I owed it. I had its great example every day before me. What you had done for me I knew that I could do, Grace, if I would, for you. And He who knows our hearts, my dearest, at this moment, and who knows there is no drop of bitterness or grief — of anything but unmixed happiness — in mine, enabled me to make the resolution that I never would be Alfred's wife. That he should be my brother and your husband, if the course I took could bring that happy end to pass; but that I never would (Grace, I then loved him dearly, dearly!) be his wife!

*Grace.* O Marion, O Marion!

*Mar.* I had tried to seem indifferent to him; but that was hard, and you were always his true advocate. I had tried to tell you of my resolution, but you would never hear me; you would never understand me. The time was drawing near for his return. I felt that I must act, before the daily intercourse between us was renewed. I knew that one great pang, undergone at that time, would save a lengthened agony to all of us. I knew that, if I went away then, that end must follow which *has* followed, and which has made us both so happy, Grace! I wrote to good Aunt Martha for a refuge in her house — I did not then tell her all, but something of my story — and she freely promised it. While I was contesting that step with myself, and with my love of you, and home, Mr. Warden, brought here by an accident, became, for some time, our companion.

*Grace.* I have sometimes feared, of late years, that this might have been. You never loved him, and you married him in your self-sacrifice to me!

*Mar.* He was then on the eve of going secretly away for a long time. He wrote to me, after leaving here, told me what his condition and prospects really were; and offered me his hand. He told me he had seen I was not happy in the prospect of Alfred's return. I believe he thought my heart had no part in that contract; perhaps thought I might have loved him once, and did not then; perhaps thought that when I tried to seem indifferent, I tried to hide indifference—I cannot tell. But I wished that you should feel me wholly lost to Alfred—hopeless to him—dead. Do you understand me, love? I saw Mr. Warden, and confided in his honor; charged him with my secret, on the eve of his and my departure. He kept it. Do you understand me, dear? (*GRACE looks confusedly upon her. DR. JEDDLER, AUNT MARTHA, and ALFRED appear at gate, c., and stand there, unobserved by GRACE and MARION.*) O Grace, dear Grace! if you were not a happy wife and mother—if I had no little namesake here—if Alfred, my kind brother, were not your own fond husband—from whence could I derive the ecstasy I feel to-night! But as I left here, so I have returned. My heart has known no other love; my hand has never been bestowed apart from it. I am still your maiden sister, unmarried, unbetrothed; your own old loving Marion, in whose affection you exist alone and have no partner, Grace!

[*GRACE embraces her, weeping.*]

*Aunt Mar.* (*Coming down, and embracing GRACE and MARION.*) This is a weary day for me, for I lose my dear companion in making you all happy; and what can you give me in return for my Marion?

*Dr. F.* (*Coming down, c.*) A converted brother.

*Aunt Mar.* That's something, to be sure, in such a farce as —

*Dr. F.* (*Penitently.*) No, pray don't.

*Aunt Mar.* Well, I won't; but I consider myself ill-used. I don't know what's to become of me without my Marion, after we have lived together half a dozen years.

*Dr. F.* You must come and live here, I suppose. We shan't quarrel now, Martha.

*Alf.* Or you must get married, aunt.

*Aunt Mar.* Indeed, I think it might be a good speculation if I were to set my cap at Michael Warden, who, I hear, is come home much the better for his absence, in all respects. But as I knew him when he was a boy, and I was not a very young woman then, perhaps he mightn't respond. So I'll make up my mind to go and live with Marion when she marries, and until then (it will not be very long, I dare say) to live alone. What do *you* say, brother?

*Dr. F.* I've a great mind to say it's a ridiculous world altogether, and there's nothing serious in it.

*Aunt Mar.* You might take twenty affidavits of it, if you chose, Anthony; but nobody would believe you with such eyes as those.

*Dr. F.* (*Embracing his daughters.*) It's a world full of hearts, and a serious world, with all its folly — even with mine, which was enough to have swamped

the whole globe ; and it is a world on which the sun never rises, but it looks upon a thousand bloodless battles that are some set-off against the miseries and wickedness of battle-fields ; and it is a world we need be careful how we libel, Heaven forgive us, for it is a world of sacred mysteries, and its Creator only knows what lies beneath the surface of His lightest image !

*Snit.* (*Looking in at the gate.*) I beg your pardon, Doctor, but have I liberty to come in? (*Comes down, and kisses MARION'S hand.*) If Mr. Craggs had been alive, my dear Miss Marion, he would have had great interest in this occasion. It might have suggested to him, Mr. Alfred, that our life is not too easy, perhaps ; that, taken altogether, it will bear any little smoothing we can give it ; but Mr. Craggs was a man who could endure to be convinced, sir. He was always open to conviction. If he were open to conviction now, I — this is weakness. Mrs. Snitchey, my dear (*calling off*), you are among old friends.

[*MRS. SNITCHEY enters from house, R., crosses and congratulates the family; she then takes MR. SNITCHEY aside.*

*Mrs. Snit.* One moment, Mr. Snitchey. It is not in my nature to rake up the ashes of the departed.

*Snit.* No, my dear.

*Mrs. Snit.* Mr. Craggs is —

*Snit.* Yes, my dear, he is deceased.

*Mrs. Snit.* But I ask you if you recollect that evening of the ball? I only ask you that. If you do, and if your memory has not entirely failed you, Mr. Snitchey, and if you are not absolutely in your dotage,

I ask you to connect this time with that—to remember how I begged and prayed you, on my knees—

*Snit.* Upon your knees, my dear?

*Mrs. Snit.* Yes, and you know it—to beware of that man—to observe his eye,—and now tell me whether I was right, and whether at that moment he knew secrets which he didn't choose to tell.

*Snit.* (*In a low tone.*) Mrs. Snitchey—Madam. Did you ever observe anything in *my* eye?

*Mrs. Snit.* (*Sharply.*) No! Don't flatter yourself!

*Snit.* (*Twitching her sleeve.*) Because, ma'am, that night, it happens that we both knew secrets which we didn't choose to tell, and both knew just the same professionally. And so the less you say about such things the better, Mrs. Snitchey; and take this as a warning to have wiser and more charitable eyes another time. Miss Marion, I brought a friend of yours along with me. (*Calling off.*) Here! Mistress! (*Enter MRS. BRITAIN, R., with her apron to her eyes, and escorted by MR. BRITAIN. MARION starts towards her, but is checked by MR. SNITCHEY, who places himself between them.*) Now, Mistress, what's the matter with you?

*Mrs. B.* The matter?

[*Looks up, and sees MARION. She gives a scream, and MR. BRITAIN a roar. MRS. BRITAIN runs to MARION and embraces her, then to MR. SNITCHEY and embraces him, lastly to MR. BRITAIN; and then covers her face with her apron, and goes into hysterics. MR. WARDEN appears,*



*and stands with downcast eyes at the gate, c. AUNT MARTHA sees him, and points him out to MARION. The two approach and converse with him.*

*Snit.* (*Drawing a document from his pocket.*) Mr. Britain, I congratulate you. You are now the whole and sole proprietor of that freehold tenement, at present occupied and held by yourself as a licensed tavern, or house of public entertainment, and commonly called or known by the sign of the Nutmeg Grater. Your wife lost one house through my client, Mr. Michael Warden, and now gains another. (*Hands him the paper.*) I shall have the pleasure of canvassing you for the county, one of these fine mornings.

*Brit.* Would it make any difference in the vote if the sign was altered, sir?

*Snit.* Not in the least.

*Brit.* (*Returning the paper.*) Then just clap in the words, "and Thimble," will you be so good? and I'll have the two mottoes painted up in the parlor, instead of my wife's portrait.

*War.* (*Coming down.*) And let me claim the benefit of those inscriptions. Mr. Heathfield and Dr. Jeddler, I might have deeply wronged you both. That I did not, is no virtue of my own. I will not say that I am six years wiser than I was, or better. But I have known, at any rate, that term of self-reproach. I can urge no reason why you should deal gently with me. I abused the hospitality of this house, and learnt my own demerits, with a shame I never have forgotten, yet with some profit, too, I would fain hope, from one (*glancing at MARION*) to whom I made my

humble supplication for forgiveness, when I knew her merit and my deep unworthiness. In a few days I shall quit this place forever. I entreat your pardon. Do as you would be done by! Forget and forgive!

*War.*

●

*Mrs. S.* ● ● *Dr. F.*

*Mr. S.* ● ● *Marion.*

*Mrs. B.* ● ● *Grace.*

*Mr. B.* ● ● *Alfred.*

CURTAIN.



## INDEX TO CHARACTERS AND COSTUMES.

---

ALFRED. See HEATHFIELD.

ALLEN, MISS ARABELLA. See MRS. NATHANIEL WINKLE.

AUNT MARTHA. See JEDDLER.

BARDELL, MRS. MARTHA. }

BARDELL, TOMMY. }

BELLE. Engaged to Scrooge in his youth. "A fair young girl, in a mourning-dress."

BENTON, MISS. Master Humphrey's housekeeper, "very smartly dressed."

BERTHA. See PLUMMER.

BOFFIN, NICODEMUS. "A broad, round-shouldered, one-sided old fellow, in mourning; dressed in a pea overcoat, and carrying a large stick." Thick shoes, thick leather gaiters, thick gloves "like a hedger's," and broad brimmed hat. At "The Bower," page 207, he is "easily attired, in an undress of short, white smock-frock."

BOFFIN, HENRIETTA. Wife of Nicodemus. "A stout lady, of a rubicund and cheerful aspect. A smiling creature, broad of figure, and simple of nature." Costume at The Bower: "a low evening dress, of sable satin, and a large, black velvet hat and feathers."

BOXER. A Newfoundland dog, belonging to John Peerybingle.

**BRITAIN, BENJAMIN.** Servant to Dr. Jeddler. Scene I. page 105. "A small man with a sour, discontented face."  
 Scene II. page 134 (three years later), "much broader, much redder, much more cheerful, and much jollier, in all respects." Scene III. page 148 (six years later), "a proper figure for a landlord, short, round, and broad."

**BRITAIN, MRS.** See **NEWCOME.**

**CHRISTMAS PAST, GHOST OF.** "A strange figure—like a child. Its hair, which hangs about its neck and down its back, is white as if with age; yet its face has not a wrinkle on it, and the tenderest bloom is on the skin. The arms are very long and muscular. Its legs and feet delicately formed, and, like the arms, bare. It wears a tunic of purest white; around its waist is bound a lustrous belt. It holds a branch of fresh green holly in its hand, and its dress is trimmed with summer flowers. The strangest thing about it is, that from the crown of its head there springs a clear jet of light, by which all this is visible; this occasions its using a great extinguisher for a cap, which it holds under its arm."

**CHRISTMAS PRESENT, GHOST OF.** As Scrooge sleeps in his chair, his room has undergone a transformation. "The walls and ceiling are hung with living green, from every part of which glisten bright gleaming berries. Such a mighty blaze roars up the chimney, as that hearth has never known in Scrooge's time. Heaped on the floor (L.), to form a sort of throne, are turkeys, geese, pies, puddings, apples, pears, oranges, immense Twelfth cakes, and seething bowls of punch. In easy state upon this couch, there sits a jolly Giant. He bears a glowing torch, shaped like Plenty's horn, and holds it up as Scrooge wakes. He is clothed in one simple deep-green robe, or mantle, bordered with white fur. The garment hangs loose, so that the breast of the figure is bare. Its feet are also bare, and on its head

## INDEX.

is a holly wreath, set here and there with shining icicles. Its dark-brown curls are long and free. Girded round its middle is an antique scabbard; but no sword is in it, and the scabbard is eaten up with rust."

CHRISTMAS YET-TO-COME, GHOST OF. "A solemn Phantom, tall and stately; shrouded in a deep black garment, which conceals its head, face, and form, leaving nothing visible, save one outstretched hand."

CLEMENCY. See NEWCOME.

CLUPPINS, MRS. ELIZABETH. A friend of Mrs. Bardell. "A little, brisk, busy-looking woman." She wears a cap.

COPPERFIELD, MR. DAVID. See Vol. I.

CRAGGS, MR. THOMAS. Attorney. "A cold, hard, dry man, dressed in gray and white, like a flint."

CRAGGS, MRS. Wife to Thomas. Dress not described.

CRATCHIT, BOB. Clerk to Ebenezer Scrooge. "Thread-bare clothes, darned up and brushed; at least three feet of white comforter, exclusive of the fringe, hanging down before him." His small, dark room, leading from Scrooge's office, is so cold that he wears his comforter constantly, and often tries to warm his hands at the candle.

CRATCHIT, MRS. Bob's wife. Scene I. page 27. "Dressed out, but poorly, in a twice-turned gown, but brave in ribbons, which are cheap, and make a goodly show for sixpence." Scene II. page 37, the same, without the ribbons.

CRATCHIT, MARTHA. Bob's eldest daughter. "A poor apprentice at a milliner's."

CRATCHIT, PETER. Bob's eldest son. No article of his dress described, except in Scene I. page 27. "A monstrous shirt collar, Bob's private property, conferred upon his son, in honor of the day."

CRATCHIT, BELINDA. Bob's second daughter.

CRATCHIT, TIM. See TINY TIM.

CRICKET, FAIRY. Not described.

## INDEX.

DILBER, MRS. A laundress.

DODSON. Of Dodson & Fogg, attorneys for Mrs. Bardell.  
“A plump, portly, stern-looking man, with a loud voice.”

DOT. See PEERYBINGLE.

EDWARD. See PLUMMER.

FAIRY. See CRICKET.

FIELDING, MRS. “A little, querulous chip of an old lady, with a peevish face, having waist like a bed-post.”

FIELDING, MAY. A friend of Dot.

FOGG. Of Dodson & Fogg, attorneys. “An elderly, pimply-faced, vegetable-diet sort of man, in black coat, dark mixture trousers, and small black gaiters.”

FRED. Scrooge's nephew. Not described.

GHOST. See CHRISTMAS.

GHOST. See MARLEY.

GRUFF AND TACKLETON. Dealers in toys, &c. See TACKLETON.

HEATHFIELD, ALFRED. Ward of Dr. Jeddler; engaged to Marion Jeddler; afterwards married to her sister, Grace. In both of the scenes in which he appears, he is dressed for travelling.

HUMPHREY, MASTER. An old gentleman.

ISAAC. A constable; friend of Mr. Jackson. “A shabby man, in black leggins, carrying a thick ash stick.”

JACKSON, MR. Clerk to Dodson & Fogg. Brown coat and brass buttons; soiled drab trousers, tightly strapped over Blucher boots; very dirty shirt collar, and a rusty black stock. Sandy hair, carefully parted on one side, flattened down with pomatum, and twisted into little semicircular tails around his face.

JEDDLER. Dr. Anthony. A philosopher. “He has a streaked face, like a winter pippin, with here and there a dimple

## INDEX.

to express the peckings of the birds, and a very little bit of pig-tail behind that stands for the stalk."

JEDDLER. "Aunt Martha;" maiden sister of Dr. Jeddler.

JEDDLER, GRACE. Daughter of Dr. Jeddler; married to Alfred Heathfield.

JEDDLER, MARION. Younger daughter of Dr. Jeddler.

JOE. "The Fat Boy." Mr. Wardle's servant. Fat, and red-faced; seldom awake, except when eating.

JOE, OLD. A pawnbroker. "A gray-haired rascal, nearly seventy years of age."

MAGNUS, PETER. "A red-haired man, with an inquisitive nose and blue spectacles; an important-looking, sharp-nosed, mysterious-spoken person, with a bird-like habit of giving his head a jerk every time he said anything." Dress not described.

MARLEY, GHOST OF. Long coat and waistcoat; tights; boots with tassels; a long chain clasped about his middle and dragging behind him; a folded handkerchief bound under his chin; his hair tied in a bristling pig-tail.

MARTHA, AUNT. See JEDDLER.

MARY. Mrs. Winkle's maid.

MICAWBER, WILKINS. "A stoutish, middle-aged person, in a brown surtout and black tights and shoes, with no more hair on his head (which was a large one, and very shining), than there is upon an egg, and with a very extensive face. His clothes are shabby, and he has an imposing shirt collar on. He carries a jaunty sort of a stick with a large pair of rusty tassels to it, and a quizzing-glass hangs outside his coat." A genteel air and a condescending roll in his voice.

MICAWBER, EMMA. Wife of Wilkins. "A thin, faded lady, not at all young; rather slatternly in her appearance." The only articles of dress mentioned, are a cap and brown gloves, and a scarf thrown over her shoulders.

NEWCOME, CLEMENCY. Scene. About thirty years old; face

## INDEX.

plump and cheerful. Dress, a printed gown, of many colors, and hideous pattern, and with short sleeves; a white apron; a little cap perched awkwardly on her head, blue stockings, very large and clumsy shoes. "She always had, by some accident, grazed elbows, in which she took such a lively interest, that she was continually trying to turn them round, and get impossible views of them." Scene (six years later), landlady of "The Nutmeg Grater." "A plump, matronly woman, with a certain bright, good-nature in her face, and contented awkwardness in her manner."

NICKLEBY, MRS. See Vol. I.

NICKLEBY, KATE. See Vol. I.

NUTMEG GRATER, THE. An inn kept by Ben. Britain and Clemency Newcome, after their marriage.

PEERYBINGLE, JOHN. "A poor carrier: lumbering, slow, honest John; this John, so heavy, but so light of spirit; so rough upon the surface, but so gentle at the core; so dull without, so quick within; so stolid, but so good!" In Scene I. (page 49), he has on a rough great coat, a large comforter around his throat, and a heavy cap. His dress for the house would be likely to be a "homespun" suit.

PEERYBINGLE, MRS. MARY. Otherwise called "Dot." "Fair, and young, and plump."

PEERYBINGLE, MASTER. "The baby; two months and three days old;" costume at "The Picnic," "a cream-colored mantle for its body, and a sort of nankeen raised-pie, for its head."

PERKER, MR. Attorney. "A little, high-dried man, with a dark, squeezed-up face, and small, restless black eyes; dressed all in black, with very shiny boots, and a clean shirt with a frill to it; a gold watch-chain and seals depend from his fob. He carries his black kid gloves in his hands, not *on* them." When he speaks, he has a way of "thrusting his wrists beneath his coat-tails, with the air of a man in the habit of pro-

pounding regular posers." He is also much addicted to taking snuff from an oblong silver box.

PICKWICK, MR. SAMUEL. See Vol. I.

PLUMMER, BERTHA. The blind daughter of Caleb Plummer.

PLUMMER, CALEB. A poor toy-maker. "A little, meagre, thoughtful, dingy-faced man, who seemed to have made for himself a great coat from the sack cloth of some old box; for when he turned, he disclosed upon the back of that garment the inscription G. & T., in large black capitals. Also the word GLASS, in bold characters. He has a wandering, thoughtful eye, a description which would equally apply to his voice."

PLUMMER, EDWARD. Son of Caleb. Scene I. page 49, and Scene IV. page 76, he is disguised as a very deaf old man, with long white hair. "His garb is quaint and odd — a long way behind the time; its hue is brown all over. In his hand he carries a great brown club, or walking-stick, which, being struck upon the floor, falls asunder and becomes a chair." In Scene VII. page 95, he is a "young, sunburnt sailor-fellow, with dark, streaming hair;" having just returned from church, where he has been united to Mary Fielding, his dress must be appropriate to the occasion, and at the same time adapted to his station in life.

RADDLE, MR. AND MRS. See Vol. I.

ROGERS, MRS. One of Mrs. Bardell's lodgers.

SAM. See WELLER.

SANDERS, MRS. A friend of Mrs. Bardell. "A big, fat, heavy-faced personage."

SCROOGE, EBENEZER. A miser; afterwards converted. Office and street dress, not described. In his room he has on a dressing-gown and slippers, and a night-cap; no cravat.

SCROOGE'S ROOM. "Sitting-room, bed-room, lumber-room. Table; sofa; small fire in grate; spoon and basin ready on table; little saucepan of gruel on the



hob; dressing-gown hanging against the wall; old fire-guard, old shoes, two fish-baskets, wash-stand on three legs, and a poker."

SLITHERS, MR. A hair-dresser.

SLOWBOY, MISS TILLY. A foundling, and servant to Dot. "Of a spare and straight shape; her garments appear to be in constant danger of sliding off those sharp pegs, her shoulders, on which they hang loosely. Her costume is remarkable for the partial developments of some flannel vestment of a singular structure; also for affording glimpses, in the region of the back, of a corset, in color, a dead green. She has a rare and surprising talent for getting the baby into difficulties, as she constantly brings its head into contact with doors, dressers, bed-posts, &c.

SNITCHEY, MR. JONATHAN. Of Snitchey & Craggs, attorneys. "He was like a magpie, or a raven, only not so sleek."

SNITCHEY, MRS. Wife of Jonathan. Dress not described, except that she wore a turban, in which was a bird of paradise feather.

STIGGINS. See Vol. I.

TILLY. See SLOWBOY.

TINY TIM. Youngest son of Bob Cratchit; a cripple, carrying a little crutch.

TRADDLES, TOMMY. See Vol. I.

WARDEN, MICHAEL. A client of Snitchey & Craggs. He first appears as a man of about thirty years of age, negligently dressed; afterwards (six years older), complexion browned by the sun; wearing a mustache; dressed in mourning; "cloaked, booted, and spurred."

WARDLE, MR. A friend of Mr. Pickwick. "A stout gentleman, in a blue coat and bright buttons, corduroy breeches, and top-boots."

WEGG, SILAS. "A literary man, *with* a wooden leg. A



## INDEX.

knotty man, and a close-grained, with a face carved out of very hard material." Dress not described.

WELLER, MRS. TONY. }  
WELLER, MR. TONY. } See Vol. I.  
WELLER, MR. SAMUEL. }

WELLER, TONY, 2D. Grandson to Tony Weller. "A very small boy, four years and eight months old, firmly set on a couple of very sturdy legs; he has a very round face, strongly resembling his grandfather's, and a stout little body of exactly his build."

WINKLE, NATHANIEL. A member of the Pickwick Club. A new, green shooting-coat, plaid neckerchief, and closely fitting drabs.

WINKLE, MRS. NATHANIEL (*née* Arabella Allen). Appears in "a lilac silk, a smart bonnet, and a rich lace veil; looking prettier than ever."

WITHERFIELD, MISS. A middle-aged lady. In the "Romantic Adventure," Vol. I. page 91, she wears a dressing-sack; her hair is done up in yellow curl-papers; and, having brushed her "back hair," she puts on her head **a muslin night-cap, with a small, plaited border.**



---

# New Plays

---

## THE LAND OF NIGHT

FAIRY COMEDY FOR YOUNG FOLKS, IN TWO ACTS

*By C. Leona Dalrymple*

Six females and chorus of twelve girls. Costumes fanciful; scene may be a decorated platform or garden. Plays an hour and a quarter. A pretty, picturesque and interesting piece for young girls that can be easily got up. Irish comedy part and strong-minded woman. Music and dancing introduced.

*Price, 15 cents*

### CHARACTERS

PRINCESS OF NIGHT, daughter of King Moon, ruler of the Province of Darkness, Kingdom of the Sky.

SIX STAR MAIDS, her attendants.

PRINCESS OF DAWN, daughter of King Sun, ruler of the adjoining Province of Light.

SIX SUNBEAM MAIDS, her attendants.

Miss JANE JOGWAY, of Woman's Rights fame, of Hoboken, N. J.

NORA MULLIGAN, her servant, of Irish extraction and full of healthy curiosity.

MOONBEAM, King Moon's courier.

ELOISE, a poor little girl from earth.

## THE SEPARATION OF THE BROWNS

A SKETCH IN ONE ACT

*By Clara B. Batchelder*

One male, two females. Costumes, modern; scene, an easy interior. Plays twenty minutes. A bright and vivacious little piece, suitable for parlor or vaudeville. Small Irish comedy part for lady. A novel idea, amusingly developed.

*Price, 15 cents*

## THE MERCHANT OF VENICE

A COMEDY IN FIVE ACTS

*By William Shakespeare*

Seventeen males, three females. Costumes, picturesque; scenery varied. Plays a full evening. A new acting version based on the prompt-book of the late Henry Irving.

*Price, 15 cents*

---

# New Plays

---

## HER WEEKLY ALLOWANCE

A FARCICAL ENTERTAINMENT IN ONE ACT

*By Jessie A. Kelley*

AUTHOR OF "THE VILLAGE POST-OFFICE," "THE PEDLER'S PARADE,"  
"SQUIRE JUDKINS' APPLE BEE," ETC.

Nine males, seven females. Costumes modern; scenery an interior, not important. Plays half an hour. A humorous presentation of the trials and tribulations of a young housekeeper. Very funny and sympathetic; a case of "we've all been there before many a time." Can be played on a platform without scenery.

*Price, 15 cents*

### CHARACTERS

Mrs. JACK TEBBITTS, *who has an allowance.*

CLEANSING FLUID AGENT, *who helps her economize.*

DOROTHY FLETCHER, *who wants a doll (child).*

PIANO AGENT, *who saves a divorce.*

Mrs. FORD, *who wants subscriptions.*

FRUIT PEDLER, *who plays a bunco game.*

SPECTACLE AGENT, *who saves the family's eyesight.*

SUSIE PEASE, *who sells soap (child).*

Mrs. KELLOGG, *who has tickets to sell.*

BOOK AGENT, *who cultivates the family's minds.*

Mrs. BROWN, *who is soliciting for a turkey supper.*

PATENT MEDICINE PEDLER, *who saves Mrs. Tebbitts' life.*

CHAIR PEDLER, *who makes the neighbors envious.*

BLIND PEDLER, *who arouses Mrs. Tebbitts' sympathies.*

ARMENIAN WOMAN PEDLER, *who is a fraud.*

RUG SELLER, *who can sell Mrs. Tebbitts nothing.*

## THE MAN FROM BRANDON

A FARCE IN ONE ACT

*By J. M. Taylor*

Three males, four females. Costumes modern; scene, an easy interior. Plays half an hour. A brisk and amusing piece, full of action and movement, touching on the popular football theme. Strongly recommended to such as desire a lively up-to-date play for young people.

*Price, 15 cents*

## HER DEAF EAR

A FARCE IN ONE ACT

*By Arlo Bates*

Two males, three females. Costumes modern; scenery, an easy interior or none at all. Plays half an hour. A clever and ingenious play appealing to the best taste.

*Price, 15 cents*

---

# New Plays

---

## OUT OF TOWN

A COMEDY IN THREE ACTS

*By Bell Elliott Palmer*

Three males, five females. Scene, an interior, the same for all three acts; costumes, modern. Plays an hour and a half. A clever and interesting comedy, very easy to produce and recommended for amateur performance. Tone high and atmosphere refined. All the parts good and full of varied opportunity. A safe piece for a fastidious audience, as its theme and treatment are alike beyond reproach.

*Price, 25 cents*

### CHARACTERS

MR. JOHN SPENCER ELLINGTON, *the unwilling possessor of a Dukedom, disguised as a valet in Act III.*

MR. ROBERT MAYHEW THORNDIKE, *alias "Bobby," a bachelor by choice.*

JAMES, *butler at Thorndike's.*

MRS. JANE HARPINGTON THORNDIKE, *a widow; mother of Bobby.*

*disguised as housekeeper and maid in Acts II and III.*

ELIZABETH THORNDIKE, *her daughter.*

MRS. J. LUDINGTON MONROE, *former classmate of Mrs Thorndike's.*

ESTHER MONROE, *her daughter.*

MARIE, *Miss Thorndike's maid.*

### SYNOPSIS

ACT I.—At Mrs. Harrington's. A deep-laid plot. An unexpected Duke. Unlooked-for trouble. The best-laid plans. A disguised household.

ACT II.—The same. A tyrannical guest. An imitation housekeeper and a spurious maid. A titled valet. Social algebra. Lifting the mask.

ACT III.—The same. The camel's back and the last straw. The beginning of the end. Mrs. T. asserts herself. The tyrant dethroned. An international alliance and a bachelor reformed.

## THE MARBLE ARCH

A COMEDIETTA IN ONE ACT

*By Edward Rose and A. J. Garraway*

*From the German*

Two males, two females. Costumes modern; scenery, an easy interior. Plays half an hour. A bright and amusing little play, suited for any occasion, but particularly for parlor theatricals, because of its simplicity and its independence of stage accessories. Very refined and high in tone. Strongly recommended.

*Price, 15 cents*

# A Novelty

## THE VILLAGE POST-OFFICE

AN ENTERTAINMENT IN ONE SCENE

*By Jessie A. Kelley*

Twenty-two males and twenty females are called for if the full text is used, but the piece is so arranged that one person may take several parts and some characters may be omitted, if desired. Scenery easy; the stage is merely arranged so as to roughly indicate a country store and post-office in one. Costumes are rural and funny. Plays a full evening. A side-splitting novelty, full of "good lines" and comical incident and character. One continuous laugh from beginning to end. Strongly recommended for all cases where fun is desired and not culture. Suited for church entertainments or general use; very wholesome and clean.

*Price, 25 cents*

### CHARACTERS

**WILLIAM JONES**, *postmaster.*

**JERUSHY JONES**, *his wife.*

**ELYZABYTHE JONES**, *their daughter, just home from boarding school, very affected.*

**JAMES HENRY JONES**, *their son, about sixteen years of age; a green country boy.*

**COLONEL GIBSON**, *big story-teller.*

**JOSEPH ROBINSON**, *bigger story-teller.*

**SILAS HARDHACK**, *still bigger story-teller.*

**DEACON SLOCUM**, *horse trader.*

**LIZY ANN SLOCUM**, *his wife.*

**BETSEY WINSLOW**, *dressmaker.*

**REV. TOBIAS DUSENBERRY.**

**REUBEN RICKS**, *who stutters.*

**SUSAN SMITH**, *who helps Mrs. Jones.*

**WIDOW GRAY.**

**LEE SING**, *a Chinaman.*

**MRS. JOSEPH ROBINSON.**

**MARY ANN STEDMAN**, *deaf.*

**CYRUS DEPEW**, *town philanthropist.*

**SAMANTHY DEPEW**, *his wife.*

**MANDY BAKER**, *believer in Woman's Rights.*

**JOB BAKER**, *her meek husband.*

**PATRICK O'MULLIGAN.**

**DOCTOR DOLLIVER.**

**DELILAH MARTIN.**

**MRS. BRIGGS**, *who has recently come from the city.*

**CLAUDIUS BRIGGS**, *her son.*

**NORAH CASSIDY**, *Mrs. Briggs' hired girl.*

**ITALIAN.**

**JONATHAN ABNER**, } *who have visited the city.*  
**CYNTHIA ABNER**, }

**MARTHY REYNOLDS**, *a comforting friend.*

**HANS SCHNEIDER**, *a German.*

**FRANCIS ST. CLAIR BIGELOW**, *agent; very dudish.*

**MATILDY HOXIE**, *who knows all the news.*

**ZEKE HINES**, *who isn't very bright.*

**HENRY WITHROW**,

**KATIE DUSENBERRY**,

**ANNIE GOODWIN**,

**BOBBIE ROBINSON**,

**JENNIE BROWN**,

**JOHNNIE DOLLIVER**

**MARY SLOCUM**,

} *children.*

### AS YOU LIKE IT

*By William Shakespeare*

Fourteen males, four females. Scenery varied; costumes of the period. Plays a full evening. A new acting version of this great play, based upon the prompt-book of Miss Julia Marlowe. Offers an admirably selected and arranged text, and ample business, following the best usage of the best actors. Recommended as the standard acting copy of this play for all uses.

*Price, 15 cents*











JAN - 2 2006 DATE DUE

SEP 1 2005

